Ontario

Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12

PROGRAM AND DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

1999

Ministry of Education
and Training

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1 Preface

Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9–12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS) sets out the policies and requirements that govern the program in English-language secondary schools in Ontario. It outlines the policies of the Ministry of Education and Training for programs in Grades 9 to 12, including the requirements for the awarding of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Unless otherwise indicated in the text, the policies described in this document replace the following as of the beginning of the 1999–2000 school year:

- the policies for Grade 9 outlined in *Transition Years, Grades 7, 8, and 9: Policies and Program Requirements, 1992* and in *The Common Curriculum: Policies and Outcomes, Grades 1–9, 1995*
- *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7–12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements, rev. ed., 1989* (OSIS)
- the policies for secondary education outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 115, "Program Policy for Elementary and Secondary Education", June 27, 1994

OSIS diploma requirements continue to apply to students who began Grade 9 between September 1984 and the beginning of the 1999–2000 school year.

The policies outlined in this document are complemented by related provincial policies outlined in *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999* and in the secondary school curriculum policy documents.

For the implementation schedule, see appendix 1: Implementation Schedule.

2 Introduction

The Ontario secondary school program is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they will need to lead satisfying and productive lives in the twenty-first century. The program will prepare students for further education and work, and will help them to become independent, productive, and responsible members of society.

To prepare students effectively for the challenges that await them, Ontario's schools should offer an education program that promotes a high standard of achievement, that provides all students with the learning opportunities and support they need, and that is relevant to society's needs and expectations. Those responsible for education must also be accountable to parents,[1] and to the Ontario community as a whole, for the ways in which they carry out their mandate.

The secondary school program is designed so that students can meet the diploma requirements in four years following Grade 8. Courses are offered in new ways intended to ensure that education is relevant both to students' needs and interests and to the requirements of postsecondary institutions and employers. In Grades 9 and 10, courses strongly promote the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills by all students, but at the same time allow students to begin to focus on their areas of strength and interest and to explore various areas of study. In Grades 11 and 12, the program is designed to allow all students to choose courses that are clearly and directly linked to their intended postsecondary destinations.

The graduation requirements emphasize a challenging, high-quality curriculum and the achievement by students of measurable results. In keeping with the emphasis on high standards, students are required to successfully complete the provincial secondary school literacy test in order to graduate. To ensure that students develop awareness of civic responsibility, they must also fulfil a community involvement requirement of 40 hours to qualify for the secondary school diploma.

1. Throughout this document, *parents* is used to refer to both parent(s) and guardian(s).

The secondary school program includes a guidance and career education program designed to encourage and help students to learn about career opportunities and to make informed decisions about the options they will encounter in the course of secondary school and those they will face as they prepare to leave school. Central features of this program are the development of an annual education plan by every student and the introduction of a teacher-adviser program. Both features are designed to help students set appropriate goals and select courses that will help them achieve these goals. Principals are also required to conduct a survey to determine the effectiveness of their guidance and career education program.

Although young people make up the majority of students in secondary school, schools also serve a significant number of adult students, including “mature students”. Policies relating to mature students are addressed in the section on prior learning assessment and recognition (*see section 6.6*).

3 Diploma Requirements and Related Procedures

In order to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), a student entering Grade 9 in the 1999–2000 school year or in subsequent years must earn a minimum of 30 credits, including 18 compulsory credits and 12 optional credits. Students must also complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and must pass the provincial secondary school literacy test.

The Requirements for the OSSD

In order to earn the OSSD, a student must:

- earn **18 compulsory credits;**
- earn **12 optional credits;**
- complete **40 hours of community involvement** activities;
- successfully complete **the provincial secondary school literacy test.**

The combination of compulsory and optional courses is designed to provide all students with the essential knowledge and skills they will need to function effectively in any area of activity, as well as the opportunities to acquire the specialized knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in their chosen postsecondary endeavours.

See also section 6.7.2: Procedures for Students Transferring to an Ontario Secondary School From a Non-inspected Private School or a School Outside Ontario, and appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students.

3.1 THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA

3.1.1 Compulsory Credits (total of 18)

Students must earn the following compulsory credits in order to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma:

4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)

1 credit in French as a second language

3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)

2 credits in science

1 credit in Canadian history

1 credit in Canadian geography

1 credit in the arts

1 credit in health and physical education

.5 credit in civics

.5 credit in career studies

plus:

1 additional credit in English, *or* a third language, *or* social sciences and the humanities, *or* Canadian and world studies

1 additional credit in health and physical education, *or* the arts, *or* business studies

1 additional credit in science (Grade 11 or 12) *or* technological education (Grades 9–12)

While the school board[2] and principal may recommend that students take certain courses *in addition to* the required subjects, they may not identify additional subjects or courses as compulsory requirements towards the earning of the secondary school diploma.

The courses that meet compulsory credit requirements are given in appendix 5.

3.1.2 Optional Credits (total of 12)

In addition to the 18 compulsory credits, students must earn 12 optional credits. Students may earn these credits by successfully completing courses that they have selected from the courses listed as available in the school course calendar.

3.1.3 Community Involvement Activities

As part of the diploma requirements, students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities. These activities may be completed at any time during their years in the secondary school program.

The community involvement requirement is designed to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities. The requirement will benefit communities, but its primary purpose is to contribute to students' development. It will provide opportunities for students to learn about the contributions they can make to the community.

Students are first informed about diploma requirements, including the community involvement requirement, in Grades 7 and 8. The procedures for completing the requirement will be outlined in the secondary school course calendar, and further information will be provided by the principal when students enter secondary school.

Students, in collaboration with their parents, will decide how they will complete the community involvement requirement. They may use their annual education plan to identify possible activities they might undertake.

Community involvement activities may take place in a variety of settings, including businesses, not-for-profit organizations, public sector institutions (including hospitals), and informal settings. Students may *not* fulfil the requirement through activities that are counted towards a credit (cooperative education and work experience, for example), through paid work, or by assuming duties normally performed by a paid employee.

The requirement is to be completed outside students' normal instructional hours – that is, the activities are to take place in students' designated lunch hours, after school, on weekends, or during school holidays.

2. The terms *school board* and *board* are used in this document to refer to district school boards and to those school authorities that offer secondary school courses.

Students will maintain and provide a record of their community involvement activities. Completion of the required 40 hours must be confirmed by the organizations or persons supervising the activities. Documentation attesting to the completion of each activity must be submitted to the principal by the student. This documentation must include for each activity the name of the person or organization receiving the service, the activity performed, the dates and hours, the signatures of the student and his or her parents, and a signed acknowledgement by the person (or a representative of the organization) involved. The principal will decide whether the student has met the requirements of both the ministry and the board for these activities.

3.1.4 The Provincial Secondary School Literacy Test

All students who enter Grade 9 in the 1999–2000 school year or in subsequent years must successfully complete the provincial secondary school literacy test in order to earn a secondary school diploma. Since students will normally take the literacy test when they are in Grade 10, the test will be administered for the first time in the 2000–2001 school year. The test will be based on the Ontario curriculum expectations for language and communication – particularly reading and writing – up to and including Grade 9.

The test will serve both to determine whether students have acquired the reading and writing skills considered essential for literacy, and to provide confirmation that those students who have completed the test successfully have attained the provincial expectations for literacy. The test will identify those students who have not demonstrated the required skills and will identify areas in which these students need remediation. School boards are required to provide remedial assistance for students who do not complete the test successfully. This assistance should be designed to help students improve their skills so that they are better prepared to retake the literacy test. Once students have successfully completed the literacy test, they may not retake the test in the same language (i.e., English or French).

3.1.4.1 Accommodations, Deferrals, and Exemptions

Accommodations. The necessary accommodations must be made to ensure that students who are receiving special education programs and services and who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) have a fair and equal opportunity to successfully complete the secondary school literacy test. Students needing such accommodations may or may not have been formally identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). The accommodations made will be the same as those that are set out in the student's IEP and/or that are available to the student in the course of his or her regular school work, including examinations and other forms of evaluation. While accommodations such as alternative forms of print and extra time are acceptable, the actual content of the secondary school literacy test must not be altered.

Deferrals. Students who might benefit from a deferral of the test may include students who have been identified as exceptional and students registered in English as a second language/ English literacy development (ESL/ELD) courses, who have not yet acquired the level of proficiency in English required for successfully completing the test.

If a parent or an adult student requests a deferral, the principal will determine whether or not a deferral should be granted and, if so, for what period of time. A principal may also initiate consideration of a deferral. The principal will make his or her decision in consultation with the parent or adult student and appropriate school staff. In cases where the parent or adult student disagrees with the decision of the principal, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

Exemptions. Students whose IEP indicates that the student is not working towards the attainment of a secondary school diploma may, with parental consent and the approval of the principal, be exempted from participating in the secondary school literacy test. Students who do not successfully complete the literacy test will not be able to receive a secondary school diploma. Should the learning expectations contained in the student's IEP be revised at some point so as to allow the student to work towards the attainment of the secondary school diploma, the student would be expected to successfully complete the secondary school literacy test.

See also sections 5.4: Program Planning for Exceptional Students and 7.12: Special Education, appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students, and appendix 8: Equivalent Diploma Requirements.

3.2 SUBSTITUTIONS FOR COMPULSORY COURSES

In order to allow flexibility in designing a student's program and to ensure that all students can qualify for the secondary school diploma, substitutions may be made for a limited number of compulsory credit courses using courses from the remaining courses offered by the school that meet the requirements for compulsory credits. To meet individual students' needs, principals may replace up to three of these courses (or the equivalent in half courses) with courses from the remainder of those that meet the compulsory credit requirements. In all cases, however, the sum of compulsory and optional credits will not be less than thirty for students aiming to earn the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and not less than fourteen for those aiming to earn the Ontario Secondary School Certificate. Substitutions should be made to promote and enhance student learning or to meet special needs and interests. *See section 7.3.2: Second-Language Programs and appendix 5: Compulsory Credits.*

The decision to make a substitution for a student should be made only if the student's educational interests are best served by such substitution. If a parent or an adult student requests a substitution, the principal will determine whether or not a substitution should be made. A principal may also initiate consideration of whether a substitution should be made. The principal will make his or her decision in consultation with the parent or adult student and appropriate school staff. In cases where the parent or adult student disagrees with the decision of the principal, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

Each substitution will be noted on the student's Ontario Student Transcript.

3.3 THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

The Ontario Secondary School Certificate will be granted on request to students who leave school before earning the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, provided that they have earned a minimum of 14 credits distributed as follows:

Compulsory credits (total of 7)

- 2 credits in English
- 1 credit in Canadian geography or Canadian history
- 1 credit in mathematics
- 1 credit in science
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1 credit in the arts or technological education

Optional credits (total of 7)

- 7 credits selected by the student from available courses

The provisions for making substitutions for compulsory credits (described in section 3.2: Substitutions for Compulsory Courses) also apply to the Ontario Secondary School Certificate.

3.4 THE CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Students who leave school before fulfilling the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or the Ontario Secondary School Certificate may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment. The Certificate of Accomplishment may be a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain vocational programs or other kinds of further training, or who plan to find employment after leaving school.

The Certificate of Accomplishment will be accompanied by the student's Ontario Student Transcript. For those students who have an IEP, a copy of the IEP may be included.

Students who return to school to complete additional credit and non-credit courses (including courses with modified or alternative expectations in special education programs) will have their transcript updated accordingly, but will not be issued a new Certificate of Accomplishment. The Ontario Secondary School Diploma or Ontario Secondary School Certificate will be granted when a student has fulfilled the appropriate requirements.

3.5 GRANTING OF DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES

On the recommendation of the principal, the Minister of Education and Training grants diplomas and certificates at any time during the year to students who have successfully completed the necessary requirements.

Where a student has completed the requirements through private study, evening classes, or summer school, the diploma or certificate will be issued by the principal of the school that possesses the student's Ontario Student Record when the final credit is earned. If the final credit is earned through the Independent Learning Centre, the student may choose to have the diploma or certificate issued by the Director of the Independent Learning Centre or the principal of the school last attended. The person issuing the diploma or certificate will submit the necessary report to the Ministry of Education and Training.

4 The Organization of Secondary School Courses

The provision of different types of courses in the secondary school program is designed to provide all students with the essential knowledge and skills they will need in any area of endeavour, as well as the opportunity to specialize in areas that are related to their particular postsecondary goals.

The types of courses offered and their organization provide for a graduated streaming of courses in Grades 9 to 12 that will keep options open for all students in the earlier grades and prepare students in senior grades for their future destinations.

4.1 TYPES OF COURSES

All schools will offer both a sufficient number of courses and courses of appropriate types to enable students to meet the diploma requirements. Schools are not expected to offer all courses in all course types.

The types of courses available in the secondary school program are described below.

– In Grades 9 and 10, three types of courses are offered: *academic courses*, *applied courses*, and *open courses*. *Academic courses* emphasize theory and abstract problems. *Applied courses* focus on practical applications and concrete examples. Both types of courses set high expectations for students while preparing them for studies in the senior grades. *Open courses* are described on page 14.

– In Grades 11 and 12, courses offered to prepare students for their postsecondary destinations include: *university preparation courses*, developed in close collaboration with universities; *university/college preparation courses*, developed in close collaboration with both universities and colleges; *college preparation courses*, developed in close collaboration with colleges; and *workplace preparation courses*, developed in close collaboration with representatives from a variety of workplaces. *Open courses* are also offered in Grades 11 and 12 (see page 14).

– *Open courses*, offered in all secondary school grades, are designed to prepare students for further study in certain subjects and to enrich their education generally. Like the other types of courses, open courses are credit-based and are counted towards the 30 credits required to meet diploma requirements.
– *Transfer courses*, available in Grades 10, 11, and 12, offer students a means of transferring from one type of course to another if their interests and goals change during secondary school. Like the other types of courses, transfer courses are credit-based and are counted towards the 30 credits required to meet diploma requirements.

See figure 1: The Organization of Courses.

4.2 GRADE 9 AND 10 COURSES: OVERVIEW

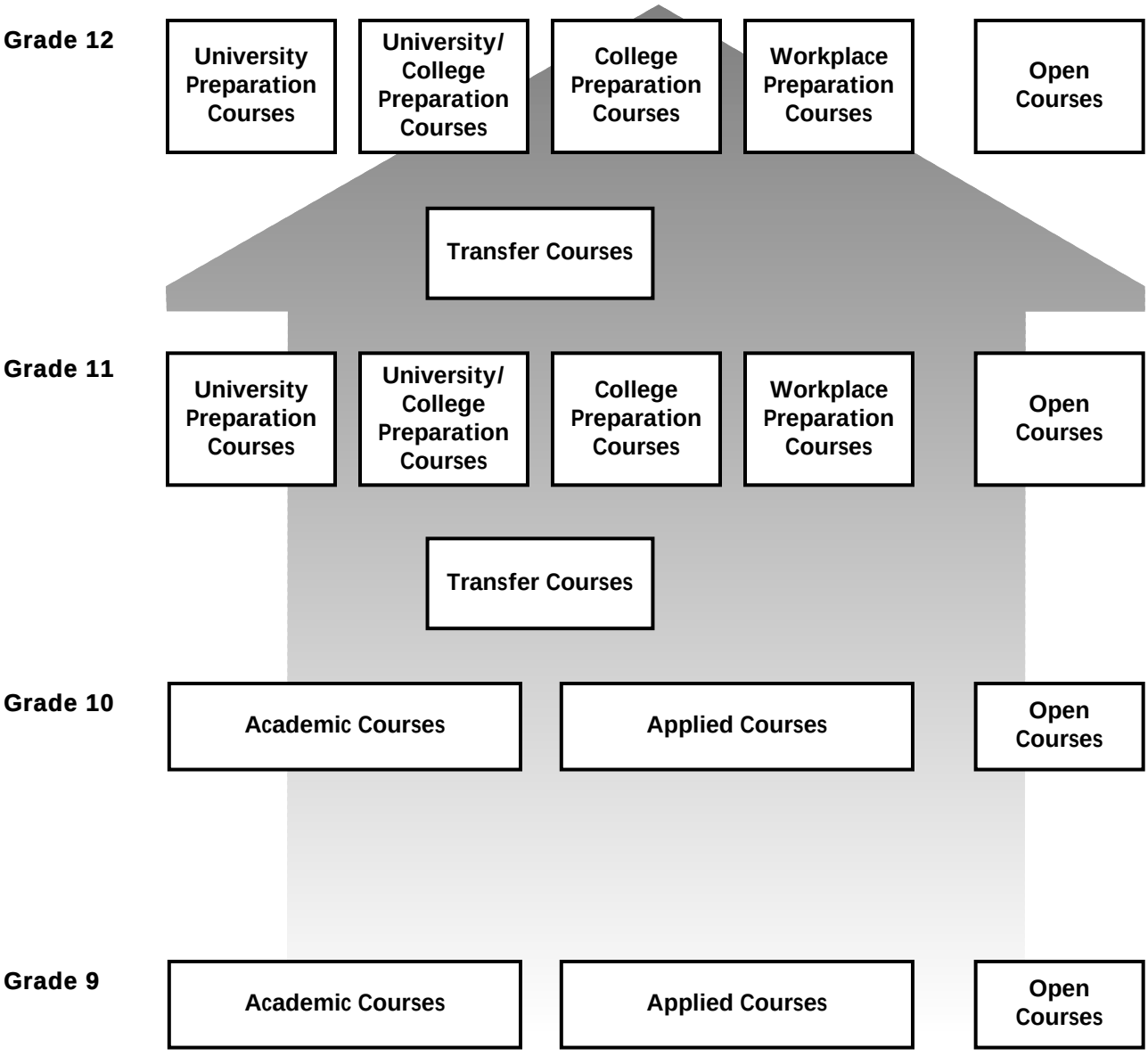
In these years, students select an appropriate combination of academic, applied, and open courses in order to add to their knowledge and skills base, explore their interests, and determine the type of educational program they are best suited to undertake in Grades 11 and 12. Students are not required to make binding decisions about a particular educational and career path. School boards must offer both academic and applied courses in the following curriculum areas: English, mathematics, science, history, geography, and French as a second language (FSL). Open courses will be offered in the other Grade 9 and 10 subjects.

4.2.1 Academic Courses and Applied Courses

Academic and applied courses set high expectations for all students. *Academic courses* focus on the essential concepts of the discipline and also explore related concepts. Academic courses develop students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing theoretical, abstract applications of the essential concepts and incorporating practical applications as appropriate. *Applied courses* also focus on the essential concepts of the discipline, but develop students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing practical, concrete applications of these concepts and incorporating theoretical applications as appropriate. Academic and applied courses differ in the balance between essential concepts and additional material, and in the balance between theory and application.

Students who are successful in any academic or applied Grade 9 course will have the opportunity to enter either the academic or applied course in the same subject in Grade 10. However, Grade 10 academic and applied courses will prepare students for specific Grade 11 courses in accordance with the prerequisites for Grade 11 courses specified in various curriculum policy documents. A student enrolled in a Grade 10 course that does not meet the prerequisite for a specific destination-related Grade 11 course can take a transfer course to qualify for the Grade 11 course if his or her educational goals should change. (*See also section 5.6: Procedures for Students Who Wish to Change Course Types.*)

Figure 1. The Organization of Courses



4.2.2 Open Courses in Grades 9 and 10

Open courses in Grades 9 and 10 are offered in all subjects other than those offered as academic and applied. (For example, open courses are offered in visual arts, music, and health and physical education, but not in English, mathematics, science, French as a second language, history, or geography.) An open course comprises a set of expectations that is suitable for all students at a given grade level. These courses are designed to provide students with a broad educational base that will prepare them for their studies in Grades 11 and 12 and for productive participation in society.

4.3 GRADE 11 AND 12 COURSES: OVERVIEW

In Grades 11 and 12, students will focus more on their individual interests and identify and prepare for initial postsecondary goals. In these grades there are also more opportunities than in Grades 9 and 10 for learning experiences beyond the school, including cooperative education, work experience, apprenticeship, and school–work transition programs.

The four destination-related types of courses are: university preparation courses, university/college preparation courses, college preparation courses, and workplace preparation courses. At a minimum, school boards must offer one course in each of these four types in Grades 11 and 12 in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, and technological education.

Open courses and transfer courses are also available in Grades 11 and 12. Open courses are appropriate for all students and are not linked to any specific postsecondary destination. Transfer courses are designed primarily to provide the content needed by students who wish to transfer from one type of course to another as a result of changes in their postsecondary plans.

4.3.1 University Preparation Courses

University preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for university programs. The range of courses offered and the content of these courses will allow students to prepare for university programs and related careers. Teaching and learning will emphasize theoretical aspects of the course content but will also include concrete applications. All university preparation courses will be based on rigorous provincial curriculum expectations and will emphasize the development of both independent research skills and independent learning skills. Students will also be required to demonstrate that they have developed these skills.

4.3.2 University/College Preparation Courses

University/college preparation courses include content that is relevant for both university and college programs. These courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for specific university and college programs. The range of courses offered and the content of these courses will allow students to prepare for college and university programs and related careers. Teaching and learning will emphasize both theoretical aspects and related concrete applications of the course content. All university/college preparation courses will be based on rigorous provincial curriculum expectations and

will emphasize the development of both independent research skills and independent learning skills. Students will also be required to demonstrate that they have developed these skills.

4.3.3 College Preparation Courses

College preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for college programs. The range of courses offered and the content of these courses will allow students to prepare for most college programs and related careers. Teaching and learning will emphasize concrete applications of the theoretical material covered in the course, and will also emphasize the development of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. All college preparation courses will be based on rigorous provincial curriculum expectations and will emphasize the development of both independent research skills and independent learning skills. Courses will also require students to demonstrate that they have developed these skills.

4.3.4 Workplace Preparation Courses

Workplace preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need for direct entry into the workplace or for admission to apprenticeship programs and other training programs offered in the community. The range and content of the courses offered will allow students to prepare for a variety of jobs, training programs, and careers. Teaching and learning will emphasize workplace applications of the course content, but will also explore the theoretical material that underlies these practical applications.

Cooperative education and work experience placements within the community are important components of workplace preparation courses. Schools will involve employers and site supervisors in the planning of cooperative education and work experience placements, and will ensure that they have their cooperation and support in implementing these courses. Workplace preparation courses will be based on rigorous provincial curriculum expectations and will emphasize the development of generic employment skills, as well as independent research and learning skills. Students will be required to demonstrate that they have developed these skills. Workplace preparation courses in particular should also promote and stress the importance of lifelong learning.

4.3.5 Transfer Courses

The purpose of transfer courses is to enable students who alter their postsecondary plans to transfer from one type of course to another in Grades 10, 11, and 12. Transfer courses are designed to provide the knowledge and skills required to bridge the gap between two courses of different types. In most cases, transfer courses are shorter and more focused than other types of courses, and can be delivered in a variety of ways. These courses will provide partial credits, since they require students to demonstrate achievement of new curriculum expectations. The credits earned will qualify as optional credits towards the diploma requirements. Transfer courses are not remedial instruction provided to enable students to achieve the curriculum expectations of a course that they have failed to complete successfully; they are designed to adequately prepare students to meet the expectations of a *different type* of course.

4.3.6 Open Courses in Grades 11 and 12

Open courses in Grades 11 and 12 allow students to broaden their knowledge and skills in a particular subject that may or may not be directly related to their postsecondary goals, but that reflects their interests. These courses are appropriate for all students regardless of postsecondary destination. These courses are designed to provide students with a broad educational base and to equip them for active and rewarding participation in society. They are not designed with the specific requirements of university or college programs or the workplace in mind.

5 The Student's Program: Planning for the Individual Student

The goal of program planning for the individual student is to provide the student with a relevant and rigorous program that meets the student's particular needs and goals, reflects his or her strengths and interests, and provides both the flexibility and balance needed to accommodate changes in these needs, goals, and interests. In the early years of secondary school, particularly, students need help in defining their personal, educational, and career goals, and in identifying the courses and options that will set them on the path to realizing these goals.

Responsibility for planning the student's program is shared by the student, his or her parents, the guidance counsellor, the teacher-adviser, and school administrators. In the course of their school career, students make a number of transitions. In order to make these transitions as smooth as possible and to help students make informed decisions at key points in their schooling, all students in Grades 7 to 12 will develop an annual education plan. In preparing this plan, students will examine their interests, needs, and achievements and identify their long- and short-term goals with respect to academic achievement, career exploration, and community involvement.

In order to plan the most effective program for the student, the student, guidance counsellor, and teacher-adviser should work together in selecting the compulsory and optional courses that are most appropriate in light of the student's strengths, needs, and interests, and that will also allow the student to consider a wide range of career and educational possibilities.

5.1 THE TEACHER-ADVISER PROGRAM

Principals will establish a teacher-adviser program for students in Grades 9 to 11. (This program is an extension of the teacher-adviser program for Grades 7 and 8.) In addition, schools may wish to provide the program for students in Grade 12.

Teacher-advisers are responsible for helping students make informed choices at key transition points in their schooling. Each teacher-adviser will work with students for a minimum of one academic year and will have regularly

scheduled meetings with them. Teachers assigned teacher-adviser duties are responsible for:

– helping students complete and review their annual education plan;
– monitoring students' academic progress in all subject areas and the achievement of their goals, as outlined in their annual education plan;
– communicating with parents and keeping them informed about students' progress.

Teacher-advisers complement the work of guidance counsellors and other teachers, and may also be required to assist other school staff in implementing programs for exceptional students. Teacher-advisers should be encouraged to enlist the help of experts in the community. Boards can choose the teacher-adviser program models that best meet the needs of their students and school community.

5.2 THE ANNUAL EDUCATION PLAN

Each student in Grades 7 to 12 will prepare an annual education plan. Students in Grades 7 to 11 will prepare their plan with the assistance of their parents, guidance counsellor, and teacher-adviser. Students will use the plan to set long- and short-term goals and to review and revise them each year. The annual education plan for students in Grades 9 to 12 will identify:

– the student's goals for academic achievement;
– the student's course selections for the following year;
– the extracurricular activities, cooperative education programs, and work experience opportunities in which the student will be participating, both in and outside school;
– a range of possible postsecondary goals. Beginning in Grade 10, students should consider, and research the requirements for, continued study at a college or university, or private vocational school; apprenticeships or internships; or direct entry into the work force.

The plan will be reviewed at least twice a year. Students in Grades 7 to 11 will review their plan with their parents and teacher-adviser. Students in Grade 12 should review their plan with their parents and guidance counsellors. For students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and who are receiving special education programs and services, the annual education plan will complement the IEP as described in sections 5.4: Program Planning for Exceptional Students and 7.12: Special Education.

5.3 SELECTION OF COURSES

The secondary school program includes several features designed to help students make appropriate educational choices and career plans. It is important that guidance counsellors, teacher-advisers, and other teachers help students to determine their interests, needs, and special strengths, and to explore the broad range of learning and employment opportunities open to them.

Parents and students will select courses in collaboration with the guidance counsellor, teacher-adviser, and subject teachers. Course selections for students under the age of eighteen must be made with parental approval. Grade 8 students and their parents choose Grade 9 courses on the basis of the students' needs, interests, strengths, and past achievements, and may also be influenced by learning opportunities

available outside the school. In Grades 9 and 10, in addition to open courses, students may choose all academic courses or all applied courses, or a combination of the two.

In Grades 11 and 12, students will select the courses they need to attain their goals, basing their choices on decisions made during the annual review of their postsecondary goals and interests.

Courses in the curriculum have been organized to provide clear educational paths for students, and to make it easier for students to select the appropriate courses. The provision of different types of courses leading to specific destinations allows students to acquire a solid core of theoretical and applied learning and to focus their learning on goals that have relevance for them.

5.3.1 The School Course Calendar

School boards will publish a school course calendar that provides students and their parents with detailed, accurate, and up-to-date information about diploma requirements and the programs and courses offered by the school. Boards must make the calendars available annually to enable students and parents to become fully informed about the courses and programs offered. The calendar must include information about the following:

- the school's overall goals and philosophy
- the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, including:
  - a list of available courses
  - a description of the community involvement requirements and procedures
  - information about the provincial secondary school literacy test, including accommodations, deferrals, and exemptions
  - policies on substitutions for the compulsory courses
- the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Certificate and information about the Certificate of Accomplishment.
- courses offered in the school and related information, including:
  - definition of a credit
  - definitions of the types of courses
  - a list of all courses in Grades 9 to 12 and of all prerequisite requirements
  - descriptions of all courses offered by the school and information regarding access to outlines of courses of study
  - descriptions of all approved locally developed courses *(see section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses)*
  - descriptions of all specialized programs, including interdisciplinary studies programs
  - an explanation of the course coding system
  - information about the remedial programs available in the school
  - policies and procedures relating to transfer courses
  - policies and procedures relating to course changes
  - information on evaluation and examination policies
  - information on recording and reporting procedures, including information on the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and the Ontario Student Transcript (OST)
  - information on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

  - the types of school support services and resources available (e.g., library resource centre, computer lab)
  - information on cooperative education programs and work experience
  - information on the board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and special education plan, and instructions for obtaining the board's special education parent guide and special education policies and programs
  - information on the school's guidance and career education program
  - information on the offering of courses through other means (e.g., through the Independent Learning Centre, distance education)
- roles and responsibilities, including:
  - the school's expectations regarding students' responsibilities, achievement, and attendance
  - the school's code of student behaviour

5.3.2 Secondary School Credit Opportunities for Elementary School Students

Under certain conditions, elementary students may "reach ahead" to take secondary school courses. The principal of a student's elementary school and the principal of a secondary school may decide, with parental consent, that it is appropriate for the student to enrol in one or more secondary courses. In such a case, the principal of the secondary school assumes responsibility for evaluating the student's achievement and for granting and recording credits.

5.3.3 Prerequisite Courses

Courses in Grades 11 and 12 may have prerequisites as a requirement for enrolment. All prerequisite courses will be identified in ministry curriculum policy documents, and no courses apart from these may be identified as prerequisites. Schools must provide parents and students with clear and accurate information on prerequisites.

If a parent or an adult student requests that a prerequisite be waived, the principal will determine whether or not the prerequisite should be waived. A principal may also initiate consideration of whether a prerequisite should be waived. The principal will make his or her decision in consultation with the parent or adult student and appropriate school staff. In cases where the parent or adult student disagrees with the decision of the principal, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

5.4 PROGRAM PLANNING FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

Recognizing the needs of exceptional students and designing programs that respond effectively to these needs are important and challenging aspects of program planning for individual students. After an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) identifies a student as exceptional, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed and maintained for that student. An IEP may also be prepared for students who are receiving special education programs and services but who have not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC. An IEP must be

developed with input from the parents and from the student if the student is sixteen years of age or older. *See below and also section 7.12: Special Education.*

5.4.1 Developing the Student's Individual Education Plan

An IEP identifies the student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate special education programs and services. It also identifies the methods by which the student's progress will be reviewed. Special education programs and services provided for the student are modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation. The IEP of exceptional students who are fourteen years of age or older and who are not identified solely as gifted must also contain a plan to make the transition to postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, or the workplace, and to help them live as independently as possible in the community. *See section 5.4.2: Developing the Student's Transition Plan.*

In developing or reviewing the student's IEP, consideration will be given to any recommendations made by the IPRC concerning special education programs and services that may be particularly appropriate for meeting the student's needs. Planning should also be done with input from those who can provide information about the student's strengths and needs, about the modifications in curriculum expectations that have worked well for the student in the past, and about the specialized services and other accommodations that have helped or are expected to help the student. In addition, planning should involve those who will play a role in providing support for the student in the future. This group may include the principal, the student's teachers and teacher-adviser, the guidance counsellor, and appropriate special education staff and support personnel. Parents can provide a unique perspective on their child's personality, development, and learning; they can provide information on their child's likes and dislikes, learning styles, interests, reactions to situations, and the talents and skills that the child has demonstrated in the home and the community. They can also reinforce and extend the efforts of the teacher by providing opportunities for practising and maintaining skills in the home. Therefore, open communication and cooperation between the home and the school are key factors in ensuring exceptional students' progress and success in learning. Student involvement, where appropriate, is important as well. Teachers should encourage students to share their perceptions of their strengths, needs, and interests. Those involved in developing the IEP should work together on an ongoing basis to review the student's progress and make adjustments to the IEP as necessary.

5.4.2 Developing the Student's Transition Plan

As part of the IEP, a plan for the student's transition from secondary school to a postsecondary setting must be developed with input from the student, parents, the principal, school staff, community agencies, and postsecondary institutions, as appropriate. The plan should reflect the student's needs and goals for his or her future. It is important to note that, as the transition plan is an integral part of the IEP, it may include relevant information that appears elsewhere in the IEP. The transition plan may:

- identify the student's strengths and needs;
- identify the student's specific postsecondary goals, if these have been determined;

- include information and recommendations relating to appropriate options for the student; for example:
  - instructions on how to obtain current information on specific postsecondary setting options that the student and his or her parents should investigate;
  - recommendations for visits to the most suitable settings for the student;
  - recommendations for placements in appropriate settings;
- identify the forms of specialized support and services that the student will need in the new setting (e.g., in a work placement);
- identify the forms of assistance that will be provided for the student with regard to his or her transfer to the new setting;
- identify the people who will provide the assistance and specify their responsibilities.

While transition plans do not have to be developed for exceptional students under the age of fourteen or for gifted students who have no other exceptionalities, boards may wish to develop transition plans for these students as well, since many of them benefit from such plans. However, it is expected that the educational and career planning needs of gifted students will be effectively addressed through the development of the annual education plan.

5.4.3 Developing an Individualized Program for the Student

The selection of courses for exceptional students should be based on the goals identified in the student's annual education plan and on the strengths, needs, learning expectations, accommodations, and any other information outlined in the student's IEP. The courses chosen should represent the most suitable combination of compulsory and optional courses. In order to ensure that the courses chosen are those that are most appropriate for the student, the school principal may replace up to three compulsory courses (or the equivalent in half courses) with courses selected from the remaining courses that satisfy compulsory credit requirements. *See section 3.2: Substitutions for Compulsory Courses.*

Assignments and activities must take into account the strengths, needs, learning expectations, and accommodations identified in the student's IEP. Exceptional students may require an individual program that differs in content, process, outcomes, and evaluation strategies from the program of most other students. Accommodations may include reducing the workload, simplifying tasks and material, and providing more time for learning and the completion of activities. Curriculum expectations may need to be modified (*see section 5.4.4*). The assistance of professional and paraprofessional staff (e.g., speech resource staff) and the use of specialized equipment may also be required to accommodate the student's needs.

5.4.4 Modifying Curriculum Expectations

5.4.4.1 Modified Curriculum Expectations

Some exceptional students and students who have not been identified as exceptional but who are receiving special education programs and services may need to have the curriculum expectations modified in keeping with their special needs. Such students may be provided with modified curriculum expectations.

5.4.4.2 Alternative Curriculum Expectations

A small number of exceptional students may need to be provided with alternative curriculum expectations in order to succeed in a particular course or courses. Alternative curriculum expectations are expectations that are not derived from those set out in ministry curriculum policy documents.

See also section 7.12: Special Education and appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students.

5.5 EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

Some students will have difficulty achieving curriculum expectations and will be at risk of not completing their diploma requirements. The learning difficulties of such students may become apparent early on in secondary school (for example, with a failure in the first semester) and in some cases even earlier, in their performance in the last years of elementary school. If left unheeded, the difficulties of such students will only escalate, and they will be at risk of dropping out of school before the end of Grade 12, without having completed the diploma requirements. Boards are therefore expected to provide a range of programs to assist students in meeting the curriculum expectations. These programs should include early identification of learning needs, appropriate teaching strategies, ongoing assessment, and communication with parents and students. It is important that teachers identify those students who are experiencing difficulties as early as possible so that the appropriate remedial measures may be taken and support strategies chosen from the range of options available. Student results in provincial tests are a valuable source of information for identifying students at risk and providing appropriate intervention strategies. *See section 5.7.1: Orientation Programs for Students Entering Secondary School.*

Early identification and intervention strategies involve both observation and the gathering of useful information about the student's preparedness for the Grade 9 program. Teachers should use observation of the student in the classroom (including work habits, response to the classroom setting, ways of relating to teachers and students), the first few assessment activities, and their knowledge of the student's achievement in prior grades to identify students who may have difficulty in successfully completing a course. Information about the student's prior achievement may be acquired from the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and, for exceptional students, previous Individual Education Plans. In addition, the teacher should discuss the student's strengths and needs, as well as prior academic performance, with the principal, teachers, and other appropriate staff of the student's elementary school.

As part of the early identification and intervention process, the principal should meet with the student and parents to discuss concerns and the measures that might be appropriate. The principal should involve the guidance counsellor, the teacher-adviser, and the teacher in this discussion as necessary.

5.5.1 Strategies and Program Options

Secondary schools have a variety of program options for students in Grades 9 to 12 who are experiencing difficulty in meeting the expectations of courses. Boards may choose from a range of strategies and program options to provide help and support for students on both an

individual and group basis in Grades 9 to 12. These include the following:

– *Remediation.* For some students, a program composed of Grade 9 credit courses and "remedial skills" programs to support achievement in English, mathematics, and science may be a suitable option. Such programs should be considered for students who need extensive remedial work in English, mathematics, and science on entering Grade 9. The skills programs provide opportunities for students to improve their skills in English, mathematics, and science so that they may participate successfully in Grade 9 English, mathematics, and science courses. The Learning Strategies 1 course may also assist students in consolidating their skills in English and/or mathematics. All credit courses should be selected in keeping with the student's areas of strength to maximize his or her chances of success. For many students, remedial intervention will be necessary only for one semester; for some students, however, the focus on English, mathematics, and/or science may have to be maintained for the entire year.

– *Substitutions for compulsory courses.* The principal may, under certain circumstances, make substitutions for some compulsory courses for individual students who stand to improve their chances of success as a result of such substitutions. *See section 3.2.*

– *Academic support programs.* These are programs designed to assist students in completing course requirements and in earning credits. Features of such programs include: individualized programming, independent study, peer-assisted activities, seminars, workshops, small-group study, and community-based mentoring.

– *Modified and/or alternative curriculum expectations.* Students at risk may need to be assessed to determine whether they need a special education program that offers modified or alternative curriculum expectations to help them succeed. *See sections 5.4.4: Modifying Curriculum Expectations and 7.12: Special Education, and appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students.*

In cases where there is a pattern of unresolved learning difficulties and where there is reason to believe that an unidentified exceptionality may be a contributing factor, it may be necessary to conduct an assessment(s) (e.g., in the area of speech) to identify the student's learning strengths and needs, and, if appropriate, to refer the student to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee. If the student is formally identified as exceptional, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. An IEP may also be prepared for a student who is provided with special education programs and services but who has not been formally identified as exceptional. *See section 7.12: Special Education.*

Students who have similar needs and whose requirements can be met through the same remedial program may be grouped together.

Additional program options that are effective in assisting students at risk include those that emphasize program relevance. Some of these options are described below.

– Grade 9 and 10 students may prepare for entry into a school–work transition program and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program offered in Grades 11 and 12 by taking applied, academic, and open courses that place emphasis on workplace preparation components, work experience opportunities,

and, in some cases, cooperative education. This approach provides students with opportunities to connect their learning with real world applications in the workplace through job shadowing and short-term work experience placements.

– School boards can develop their own courses at the Grade 9 and 10 levels to provide students at risk of dropping out of school with opportunities for both in-school learning and work experience within the community. Such courses can prepare students for cooperative education placements and school–work transition programs in Grades 11 and 12. *See section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses.*
– In Grades 11 and 12, career preparation programs linked to postsecondary education, or school–work transition programs linked to specific employment opportunities or apprenticeship, will provide students with relevant and challenging courses and related work experience and cooperative education placements. Students will also benefit from enhanced learning opportunities and courses that are activity-based and project-driven.

School boards should seek the cooperation and assistance of community agencies in providing strategies and resources that effectively address the broader needs of students at risk.

School boards should evaluate the success of the intervention strategies used for helping students at risk and for providing support in other circumstances in which it might be needed (e.g., reentry programs, the Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils program).

See also sections 5.7: Orientation and Exit Programs, 7.4.3: School–Work Transition Programs, 7.5: Cooperative Education and Work Experience, 7.8: Specialized Schools, and 7.11: Programs for Students at Risk, and appendix 7: Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP).

5.5.2 The Role of the Annual Education Plan

Students' annual education plans, developed in Grades 7 to 12, can be of great assistance in planning an appropriate program for students who may have difficulty in successfully completing a course. In developing the plan, teachers, teacher-advisers, parents, and students work together to select a package of courses that both reflects the student's individual strengths, needs, and interests, and focuses on the student's particular postsecondary goals. In the case of exceptional students, collaborative planning will also take into account the student's previous and current Individual Education Plans.

5.5.3 Procedures for Students Who Fail to Meet Course Expectations

Where a student does not achieve the curriculum expectations of a course, the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the parents and the student, will determine what procedure or type of program would best enable the student to meet the expectations and earn credit for the course. *For examples of options that could be made available to the student, see section 6.5: Procedures for Students Who Fail or Who Do Not Complete Courses.*

Some students who do not meet course expectations may require an individual assessment that may indicate that referral to an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) may be appropriate.

5.6 PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WHO WISH TO CHANGE COURSE TYPES

Some students, after successfully completing a certain type of course, may change their educational goals and, as a consequence, may need to take compulsory and optional credit courses of a different type from those they initially chose. Although students enrolled in one type of course may enrol in a different type of course in a subsequent year, changing course types becomes more difficult as students advance through the system, or in situations involving courses that have prerequisites (*see section 5.3.3: Prerequisite Courses*). Nevertheless, a variety of options exist to enable students to make the transition.

When a student plans to switch from one course type in Grade 9 to the other in Grade 10 in the same subject, the principal must inform the student and his or her parents that the student will be strongly encouraged to successfully complete additional course work of up to 30 hours and as defined by the ministry in order to demonstrate achievement of the learning expectations that are included in the one Grade 9 course but not the other. This additional course work can be taken in summer school or in a program outside the regular school hours or during the school day.

A student wishing to change course types between Grades 10 and 11 and/or Grades 11 and 12 may, for example:

– take a transfer course that will bridge the gap between course types;

– take a course of another type (e.g., academic) that will satisfy the prerequisites for a course in a higher grade (e.g., a university preparation course) that the student wishes to take;

– take a summer course or undertake independent study to achieve the uncompleted expectations that are required to enter the new program.

Schools must provide the opportunity for students to change course types and clearly describe in their school course calendar the procedures involved. School course calendars must also inform students and parents about the availability of transfer courses.

5.7 ORIENTATION AND EXIT PROGRAMS

As part of the school's guidance and career education program, schools are required to provide orientation programs for students entering or reentering secondary school. Schools should also provide exit programs for students who leave school upon or before graduation. The purpose of both types of program is to help students to make smooth transitions.

5.7.1. Orientation Programs for Students Entering Secondary School

Principals are responsible for developing an orientation program for all new students, including those who enter school during the year. The orientation program will include an information package for students and their parents. The package may include a number of items contained in the school's course calendar. Information provided to students in Grades 7 to 11, and their parents, will include the name of the student's teacher-adviser.

Students who have recently come to Ontario, students who are returning to high school, and students who are identified as exceptional may require specialized orientation programs and assistance to integrate successfully into the school. Such assistance may include: a credit course on learning strategies, an individualized orientation program, and/or assistance from a

peer mentor. *See also sections 6.6: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition and 6.7: Student Transfers.*

For students who are re-entering secondary school in order to complete their diploma requirements, boards are encouraged to provide re-entry programs to assist the students in making the transition back to secondary school. Students could take such programs in an alternative setting (e.g., a workplace). *See also sections 7.4.1: Career Preparation Programs and 7.8: Specialized Schools.*

5.7.2 Exit Programs for Students Leaving Secondary School

Students will leave school for a variety of reasons. Some will transfer to a new school; some will graduate; others will leave school before graduation to pursue goals outside the school. Schools should help all these groups of students make appropriate and workable plans for their immediate future by inviting them to participate in an exit program. The goal of an exit program is to help students make a successful transition to the next stage of their lives.

Principals are encouraged to provide exit programs that include a review of students' annual education plans and future goals. The exit programs for graduates should include:

- a review of each student's plans for postsecondary education, training, apprenticeship, or employment;
- information on: university and college programs, application and/or admission procedures, visits to campuses, etc.;
- information on apprenticeship programs;
- information on procedures for applying for employment;
- information on managing their personal finances.

Students leaving school before graduation should be given a copy of their Ontario Student Transcript, as well as their Ontario Secondary School Certificate or Certificate of Accomplishment, as appropriate. The exit program for students leaving school before graduation should include:

- a review of their achievements;
- discussion and clarification of the student's plans for his or her immediate future;
- information on postsecondary education options (e.g., evening courses, correspondence courses, re-admission to secondary school at a later date);
- information about community services and community contacts available for assistance;
- information on apprenticeship programs;
- information on procedures for applying for employment;
- information on managing their personal finances.

See sections 3.3: The Ontario Secondary School Certificate; 3.4: The Certificate of Accomplishment; and 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript.

6 Achievement and Accreditation

6.1 THE CREDIT SYSTEM

A credit is granted in recognition of the successful completion of a course that has been scheduled for a minimum of 110 hours. Credits are granted by a principal on behalf of the Minister of Education and Training for courses that have been developed or approved by the ministry. A half credit may be granted for each 55-hour part of a 110-hour ministry-developed course. Half-credit courses must comply with ministry requirements as outlined in the curriculum policy documents. Partial credits may be granted for the successful completion of certain locally developed courses. *See section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses*.

For the purpose of granting a credit, "scheduled time" is defined as the time during which students participate in planned learning activities designed to lead to the achievement of the curriculum expectations of a course. Planned learning activities include interaction between the teacher and the student and assigned individual or group work (other than homework) related to the achievement of the learning expectations in the course. Planned learning activities will be delivered through classroom instruction and activities and/or through community placements related to work experience and cooperative education.

6.2 ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Effective assessment, evaluation, and reporting not only provide information about student achievement, but also afford a basis for improving both instructional programs and student achievement. A well-designed system of assessment, evaluation, and reporting based on clearly stated curriculum expectations and achievement criteria allows teachers to focus on high standards of achievement for all students and promotes consistency in these practices across Ontario.

6.2.1 Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. Information gathered through assessment and evaluation helps teachers to identify students' difficulties as well as to detect weaknesses in programs. Assessment and evaluation are thus important tools for adapting curriculum and instructional approaches to students' needs and for determining the overall effectiveness of programs and classroom practices.

Assessment is the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, demonstrations, projects, performances, and tests) that accurately reflects how well students are achieving the curriculum expectations. As part of assessment, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback that guides their efforts towards improvement. Evaluation is the process of judging the quality of a student's work on the basis of established achievement criteria, and assigning a value to represent that quality. In Ontario secondary schools, the value assigned will be in the form of a percentage grade.

Assessment and evaluation will be based on the provincial curriculum expectations and the achievement levels outlined in the secondary curriculum policy documents. Teachers will be provided with materials, including samples of student work (exemplars), that will assist them in their assessment of student achievement. Until these materials are provided, teachers may continue to follow their current assessment and evaluation practices.

In order to ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that:

- address both what students learn and how well they learn;
- are based on both the categories of knowledge and skills and the achievement level descriptions in the achievement chart for each discipline, as given in the secondary curriculum policy documents, once the assessment materials (e.g., exemplars) mentioned above are available;
- are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of the students;
- are fair to all students;
- accommodate the needs of exceptional students, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plans (*see sections 5.4: Program Planning for Exceptional Students and 7.12: Special Education, and appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students*);
- accommodate the needs of students who are learning the language of instruction;
- ensure that each student is given clear directions for improvement;
- promote students' ability to assess their own learning and to set specific goals;
- include the use of samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement;

– are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of each course and at other appropriate points throughout the course.

6.2.1.1 Achievement Levels

Levels, or degrees, of achievement of the curriculum expectations are described in detail in the achievement charts that appear in the secondary curriculum policy documents. The charts are organized into broad categories of knowledge and skills and provide detailed descriptions of each level of achievement. While they are broad in scope and general in nature, the achievement levels provide a reference point for all assessment practice. They serve as a guide for gathering assessment information and a framework within which to assess and evaluate each student's achievement. As such, they enable teachers to make consistent judgements about the quality of students' work and to provide clear and specific information about their achievement to students and their parents.

The broad categories of knowledge and skills are: Knowledge/Understanding, Thinking/Inquiry, Communication, and Application/Making Connections. (The names of the categories vary slightly from one discipline to another, reflecting differences in the nature of the disciplines.)

The levels of achievement are associated with percentage grades, and are defined as follows:

80–100% – Level 4: A very high to outstanding level of achievement. Achievement is *above* the provincial standard.

70–79% – Level 3: A high level of achievement. Achievement is *at* the provincial standard.

60–69% – Level 2: A moderate level of achievement. Achievement is *below, but approaching*, the provincial standard.

50–59% – Level 1: A passable level of achievement. Achievement is *below* the provincial standard.

Below 50%: Insufficient achievement of the curriculum expectations. The student will not receive a credit for the course.

Level 3 is defined as the provincial standard. A student achieving at this level is well prepared for work in the next grade or the next course.

6.2.2 Procedures for Communicating Student Achievement

The information on student achievement gathered through assessment and evaluation should be communicated to students and parents at regular intervals and in a variety of informal and formal ways. In addition, parents must be informed of the policies, procedures, and criteria involved in the assessment and evaluation of student achievement, and of policies concerning students' promotion from one course to the next. Informal communication of student achievement includes ongoing feedback to students based on assessment strategies implemented throughout the course, as well as feedback to parents during parent-teacher conferences and at other appropriate times. The Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12 is the formal instrument used to communicate student achievement to parents, and the Ontario Student Transcript provides the record of a student's standing with regard to the secondary school diploma requirements.

6.2.2.1 The Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12

Student achievement must be communicated formally to students and parents by means of the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12. The report card documents the student's achievement in every course, at particular points in the school year or semester, in the form of a percentage grade. It also includes teachers' comments on the student's strengths and weaknesses, specifying the areas in which improvement is needed and the ways in which it might be achieved. The report card contains separate sections for recording attendance and for evaluating the student's learning skills in every course.

At the end of each course, a final grade is recorded, and credit is granted for every course in which the student's grade is 50 per cent or higher (reflecting achievement at level 1 or above). (*See also section 6.1: The Credit System*.) The final grade for each course will be based in part on assessments and evaluations conducted throughout the course, and in part on a final evaluation. The relative weights assigned to these two components are specified in the curriculum policy document on program planning and assessment.

6.2.2.2 The Ontario Student Transcript

The Ontario Student Transcript (OST) provides a comprehensive record of a student's overall achievement in high school.

The credits that a secondary school student has earned towards fulfilment of the requirements for the graduation diploma will be recorded on the OST. This record will include all the credits gained by the student using any of the means described in section 6.8: Alternative Ways of Earning Credits Towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. (For further information on the OST, refer to *Ontario Student Transcript (OST), 1999*, and appendix 1: Implementation Schedule.) The transcript, which is part of the Ontario Student Record (OSR), will include the following information:

- the student's achievement in Grades 9 and 10, with percentage grades earned and credits gained for successfully completed credit courses
- a list of all Grade 11 and 12 courses and Ontario Academic Courses (OACs)[3] taken or attempted by the student, with the percentage grades earned and the credits gained (students repeating a course for which they have already earned a credit will earn only one credit for the completion of that course – see "Course Withdrawals", on page 34)
- identification of any course that has been substituted for one that is a diploma requirement
- confirmation that the student has completed the community involvement requirement
- the student's final result on the provincial secondary school literacy test
- an indication of any extraordinary circumstances affecting the student's achievement in a Grade 11 or 12 course or an OAC (see "Extraordinary Circumstances", on page 34)

In addition to recording the number of credits earned, schools may indicate on a student's transcript that the student has taken a specialized program (*see section 7.4*) or a program in a specialized school (*see section 7.8*). Students tak-

3. OACs are provincially designed university entrance courses developed under OSIS. *See also appendices 2 and 3.*

ing, for example, a program in one of the arts or in technological education or in a language may thus be given recognition on their OST for their participation in such a program.

Course Withdrawals. Withdrawal after a specified time from any Grade 11 or 12 course or an OAC will be recorded on the OST.

Extraordinary Circumstances. A student's parents, or students who are adults (eighteen years of age or older), may request that the principal identify by means of a special indicator (see *Ontario Student Transcript (OST), 1999*) those Grade 11 or 12 or OAC marks that, due to extraordinary circumstances prevailing at the time they were awarded, are not considered to be a true reflection of the student's ability and/or performance. If a parent or an adult student requests that a special indicator be added, the principal will determine whether or not it should be added. A principal may also initiate consideration of whether a special indicator should be added. The principal will make his or her decision in consultation with the parent or adult student and appropriate school staff. In cases where the parent or adult student disagrees with the decision of the principal, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

*Exceptional Students.*The OST will also be used to record the achievement of students who have alternative learning expectations in an individualized, non-credit program.

6.2.3 Assessment and Evaluation of Programs

In addition to providing essential information about student achievement, classroom assessment and evaluation give an indication of the effectiveness of programs and teaching practices. Assessment and evaluation of student achievement thus provide teachers with an opportunity to think critically about their methods of instruction and the overall effectiveness of their program. Course content, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures should be reviewed and evaluated systematically by teachers and principals, both in relation to the learning goals in the discipline and the specific needs of the students for whom the course is designed.

Analysis of the results of board- and province-wide assessments, as well as of national and international testing, should provide additional information on student achievement and program effectiveness, complementing the program assessments conducted by teachers and principals. School boards are encouraged to develop action plans based on the results of these system-wide and large-scale external assessments to guide schools in making the program modifications needed to improve the achievement of their students.

An environment in which the critical analysis of assessment results is seen as a positive exercise leading to the improvement of student learning will encourage teachers to use information from a variety of sources to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and teaching methods, and to make the modifications needed to better meet the learning needs of their students.

See section 5.3.1: School Course Calendars.

6.3 PROMOTION FROM GRADE 8 TO GRADE 9

Students who have successfully completed Grade 8 will be promoted from elementary school and admitted to a secondary school.

It is expected that, as a general rule, exceptional students will proceed to secondary school within two years of the average age for entering secondary school. However, it is recognized that there may be some exceptional students who will need additional time at the elementary school level to prepare for secondary school. There may also be some school boards that do not yet have secondary school programs that are suitably modified to meet the needs of exceptional students. School boards should have plans to develop appropriate secondary school programs that will meet the needs of their exceptional students.

Under the Education Act, a student who has not been promoted from elementary school may apply for admission to a secondary school. The student will be admitted to the secondary school if the principal of the secondary school is satisfied that the student is capable of undertaking the work of the school. The Education Act provides that an applicant who has been denied admission to a secondary school may appeal to the board, which may, after a hearing, decide whether or not the applicant should be admitted to the secondary school.

6.4 ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is critical for the student's learning and achievement of course expectations. To encourage regular attendance by students, schools will ensure that students and their parents are informed about the school's policy on attendance through the school's course calendar.

Where, in the principal's judgement, a student's frequent absences from school are jeopardizing his or her successful completion of a course, school staff should meet with the student and the parents to explain the potential consequences of the absences, including failure to gain credits, and discuss steps that could be taken to improve attendance.

Students of compulsory school age whose absence is reported to the school board attendance counsellor will have the reason for their absence investigated.

See also appendix 7: Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP).

6.5 PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WHO FAIL OR WHO DO NOT COMPLETE COURSES

Where a student has completed a course within the school year or semester but has not been successful in demonstrating achievement of the curriculum expectations to a passing level, the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the parents and the student, should determine what procedure or type of program would best enable the student to meet the expectations and

earn credit for the course. Arrangements should be made so that one or more of the following options is available to the student:

– Where possible, the student should be allowed to repeat only the material relating to the expectations not achieved. The student may choose to achieve these expectations in summer school, through independent study, through an individualized remediation program, or through distance education. The student's work will be evaluated to determine whether the expectations have been successfully completed.
– If available, the student can enrol in a remedial program designed for a group of students with similar needs.
– The student may decide to repeat the entire course.

With respect to compulsory courses, a student who fails a course or who chooses to withdraw from a course during the school year or the semester (after consultation with parents and school staff) should be informed of the consequences for meeting diploma requirements. The program options available to the student to enable him or her to meet the requirements should be outlined, and possible alternative courses identified. *For procedures related to the recording of course attempts and withdrawals, see section 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript.*

6.6 PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION

Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. Where such learning has occurred outside Ontario classrooms, students enrolled in Ontario secondary schools and inspected private schools may have their skills and knowledge evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma. This formal evaluation and accreditation process is known as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). PLAR procedures are carried out under the direction of the school principal, who grants credits.

The PLAR process developed by a school board in compliance with ministry policy involves two components: "challenge" and equivalency. The "challenge process" refers to the process whereby students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document. Assessment instruments for this process must include formal tests (70 per cent of the final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate to the particular course (30 per cent of the final mark). Such strategies may include the evaluation of student work, including written assignments and laboratory work, and observation of student performance. Determining equivalency involves the assessment of credentials from other jurisdictions.

Because young people benefit in many ways from the learning experiences offered in secondary school, PLAR has a specific, limited function

in the Ontario secondary school program. For students who are under the age of eighteen, or who are eighteen or over but have never left high school for a year or more, a maximum of four credits may be granted through the challenge process for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses, with no more than two in one subject area. Equivalency credits are granted to these students for placement only. Students who are eligible for equivalency credits are those who transfer to Ontario secondary schools from non-inspected private schools or schools outside Ontario. *See section 6.7.2 for full details.*

PLAR procedures must also be available to exceptional students. Assessment strategies must be adapted for this group in keeping with their special needs; for example, extra time might be allowed for the completion of work or a quiet environment provided for activities. While PLAR may be of benefit to some gifted students, it is not intended to be used as a replacement for or alternative to enriched or other special programs for gifted students.

The challenge and equivalency procedures are also available to *mature students* – that is, students who are eighteen years of age or over (i.e., adults) who are returning to school to earn a diploma after being out of high school for at least one year – but requirements concerning application of these procedures differ for this group because of their broader life experience. Principals will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a mature student needs in order to meet diploma credit requirements. Up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits may be granted to a mature student at the discretion of the principal following individual assessment. Mature students may earn 10 of the 14 remaining Grade 11 and 12 credits needed to meet diploma requirements in three ways: (1) they may demonstrate achievement of the required secondary school curriculum expectations and receive credit through the challenge process; (2) they may present education and/or training credentials for assessment through the equivalency process; or (3) they may take the course. Mature students will earn a minimum of 4 Grade 11 and 12 credits by taking the course at a secondary school, through correspondence, or through any of the alternative ways described in section 6.8. Mature students who have previously accumulated 26 or more credits towards the diploma must successfully complete the required number of courses to bring their total number of credits up to 30 before they will be eligible to receive the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Mature students working towards the OSSD under OSS must also satisfy the diploma requirements with regard to the provincial secondary school literacy test. Principals will determine the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student will have to complete.

Beginning with the 2003–4 school year, adults who return to secondary school to earn their diploma will be required to comply with the PLAR requirements described above. Adults who return to secondary school before the beginning of the 2003–4 school year will have their placement determined according to the requirements set out in OSIS, section 6.14: Equivalent Standing for Mature Students. *See appendix 1: Implementation Schedule.*

6.7 STUDENT TRANSFERS

6.7.1 Procedures for Students Transferring From One Ontario Secondary School to Another

Secondary school students who transfer from one Ontario secondary school to another will have their credits transferred with them. The principal of the receiving school may award credit for work started in the previous school but completed in the receiving school. Where this work cannot be completed in the receiving school, the receiving principal may, after consultation with the principal of the sending school, award a partial credit in recognition of the student's achievement of some of the course expectations.

If a student transfers from a French-language to an English-language secondary school, he or she must successfully complete at least one compulsory Grade 12 English course. Conversely, if a student transfers from an English-language to a French-language secondary school, he or she must successfully complete at least one compulsory Grade 12 Français course.

6.7.2 Procedures for Students Transferring to an Ontario Secondary School From a Non-inspected Private School or a School Outside Ontario

Where students who do not have Ontario credits are transferring from a non-inspected private school or a school outside Ontario to an Ontario secondary school, the principal of the receiving school will, in the process of deciding where the student should be placed, determine as equitably as possible the total credit equivalency of the student's previous learning, and the number of compulsory and optional credits still to be earned. Students will have to successfully complete the provincial secondary school literacy test. Principals will determine the number of hours of community involvement activities that the student will have to complete. The principal should note the results of his or her assessment and deliberations in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). *See appendix 8: Equivalent Diploma Requirements*.

6.8 ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF EARNING CREDITS TOWARDS THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA

The majority of secondary school students will earn their credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma by enrolling in the courses offered in their secondary school. However, a number will wish to consider alternative ways of earning the required credits. The options available to such students include: correspondence courses offered by the Independent Learning Centre; independent study; private study; continuing education (including summer school), and private school. Each of these alternative ways of earning credits is discussed below.

6.8.1 Correspondence Courses

The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) offers secondary school credit courses (including transfer courses) designed primarily for individuals who wish to work independently towards the secondary school diploma. These courses are provided to residents of Ontario, and are offered primarily through correspondence. A publicly funded school or private school may choose to enrol its students in ILC courses. Information concerning eligibility, enrolment procedures, and course offerings is available from the ILC. *See also section 7.6: The Independent Learning Centre*.

When a student has successfully completed an ILC course, the principal will record his or her standing on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST). *See section 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript*.

6.8.2 Independent Study

In providing opportunities for independent study, schools can offer students a wider range of program options. Courses delivered through the Independent Learning Centre may form part of independent study.

There is no restriction on the number of periods that a teacher may allow for independent study within any given course. The teacher of the course is responsible for assigning components of the course, suggesting available resources, evaluating the achievement of the student, and ensuring that the total work involved is equivalent to that expected in the time scheduled for the course. Transfer courses can be completed through independent study. *See section 4.3.5: Transfer Courses.*

When a student has successfully completed a course through independent study, the principal will record his or her standing on the OST. *See section 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript.*

6.8.3 Private Study

A student may be permitted to take one or more courses through private study when one of these two circumstances prevails: (a) the student is deemed to have a valid reason for not attending classes, or (b) the school does not offer the course(s). The school must be willing to monitor the student's progress and evaluate his or her work. ILC courses may form part of a student's private study program.

A student who wishes to apply for private study should submit an application as early in the school year as possible, normally not later than the first school day in September if the student intends to complete the course by January 31, or not later than the first school day in February if the student intends to complete the course by June 30. The application will be submitted to the principal of the secondary school that will be monitoring the student's learning.

When a student has successfully completed a course through private study, the principal will record his or her standing on the OST. *See section 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript.*

6.8.4 Continuing Education

Continuing education enables people to engage in purposeful learning activities at various points in their lives. It involves the provision of credit and non-credit courses for individuals who wish to study part time, or full time for a short term, outside the program offered in elementary or secondary schools. Continuing education courses may include:

- credit courses for adults, including mature students, and secondary school students offered through evening, summer school, or daytime classes. The range of credit courses offered is described in ministry curriculum policy documents;
- adult basic education courses, including courses in adult basic literacy; citizenship and language training; and English as a second language, French as a second language, or Native languages for adults who do not have facility in one of these languages.

To be considered for admission to a continuing education class offered for diploma credit in the evening, a day-school student must provide:

– a statement signed by the day-school principal indicating that there has been consultation with the student regarding enrolment in the class, and that the student has been granted permission to enrol in the class;
– evidence of parental approval if the student has not attained the age of eighteen.

The day-school student's final achievement will be reported to the principal of the day school. Successful completion of Grade 9 and 10 courses will be recorded on the student's OST. Completion of Grade 11 and 12 courses and OACs (successful or not), as well as withdrawal from these courses, will also be recorded on the student's OST.

The scheduled time in any continuing education course taken for credit will not be less than 90 hours. It is the responsibility of the principal of the continuing education program to ensure that each course contains the amount of work that would ordinarily be completed in the time scheduled for the course in a day-school program.

6.8.4.1 Summer School

School boards may offer summer school programs. The terms of admission to a course offered through summer school will be determined by the board that operates the summer school. A summer school program may not begin until after the last school day in the school year and must end before the first school day of the following school year.

Secondary schools may wish to offer courses for credit through summer school to meet a variety of student needs. For example, summer courses may be offered for credit in order to:

– enable students to take credit courses that they have not previously taken;
– allow students to retake courses they have not successfully completed during the school year or courses in which they wish to improve their achievement;
– enable students who have altered their post-secondary plans to take transfer courses that will allow them to take courses of a different type from those they have previously taken.

Non-credit summer school courses may be offered to address students' remedial needs. To qualify for diploma credit, courses should fulfil the same credit requirements as courses offered during the regular school year, including the requirement that each one-credit course be scheduled for 110 hours. Students who take a Grade 11 or 12 course or an OAC during the school year and then repeat the course at summer school will receive only one credit for that course; however, both marks will be recorded on the student's OST.

On or before the last day of August, a statement of the student's achievement in summer school will be issued to the student by the principal of the summer school. Where the course(s) taken carry diploma credit, the achievement will also be reported to the principal of the school that the student last attended. The student's achievement in summer school will be recognized by

the principal. Successful completion of Grade 9 and 10 courses will be recorded on the student's OST. Completion of Grade 11 and 12 courses and OACs (successful or not), as well as withdrawal from these courses, will also be recorded on the student's OST. *See section 7.12: Special Education*.

6.8.5 Private School

Students who attend a private school in Ontario that offers courses for credit towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and that is inspected by the Ministry of Education and Training may be eligible to earn the diploma, provided that they fulfil all diploma requirements.

When a student has successfully completed a course, the principal will record his or her standing on the OST. *See section 6.2.2.2: The Ontario Student Transcript*.

6.8.6 Programs in Music Taken Outside the School

A maximum of two credits may be awarded to students taking music programs outside the school through the following processes *combined*:

– For music programs completed by students outside the school, the principal of a secondary school may award *a maximum of two university preparation credits* towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The credits will be awarded upon presentation of the official examination result forms or certificates. (*See appendix 4: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits.*) Additional music credits earned *in school* may be counted towards the secondary school graduation diploma. Of these in-school music credits, *a maximum of one Grade 12 credit* may be awarded as a university preparation credit.

– Students may be awarded *a maximum of two Grade 10 to 12 music credits* through the PLAR challenge process. *See section 6.6: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition*.

6.9 GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) TESTING

The General Educational Development (GED) tests are designed to provide adults who have not graduated from high school with an alternative means of demonstrating that they have an equivalent level of education. (*For the other means whereby adults can gain recognition for prior learning, see section 6.6: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition*.)

In GED testing, candidates take five tests that measure skills in writing, science, mathematics, social studies, and the critical appreciation of literature and the arts. Successful candidates are awarded an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate. GED tests are only administered through the Independent Learning Centre.

7 Program Planning and Delivery by School Boards and Schools

The primary responsibility for the planning of school programs lies with the principal and teachers of the school. In planning and developing programs, the principal and teachers must work in conjunction with others in the school community, including members of the school board and other educators employed by the board.

Since programs must be designed to meet the needs of a wide variety of students – for example, university or college preparation programs, school–work transition programs, various specialized programs, special education programs, and cooperative education programs – schools and boards should involve community partners, including university, college, and workplace representatives and members of community agencies, when planning and developing their programs. The participation of representatives of postsecondary institutions, various workplaces, and trade associations is invaluable in ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of a school's programs.

The participation of the wider community is also essential in the delivery of some of these programs – for example, the involvement of local employers in a school's cooperative education or school–work transition programs.

7.1 COURSE DEVELOPMENT

7.1.1 Courses of Study

Boards will offer courses based on the curriculum expectations set out in ministry curriculum policy documents, and may also offer courses that are developed locally (*see sections 7.1.2 and 7.1.3*).

The principal of a school will retain on file up-to-date copies of the outlines of all of the courses of study for courses offered at the school. These outlines of the courses of study must be available at the school for parents and students to examine. Parents of students under the age of eighteen need information on course content since they must approve their child's choice of

courses, and adult students need this information to help them choose their courses. These outlines of the courses of study in the secondary school will include at least the following information:

– name of the ministry's curriculum policy document(s) from which the outline of the course of study has been developed
– name of the board, school, and department, as well as the names of the department head and developers, and the dates of development and revision
– course title, course type, grade, course code, credit value
– prerequisite(s) and corequisite(s), if any
– overall curriculum expectations
– outline of the course content, including unit titles in the sequence in which the material will be studied
– teaching strategies appropriate to the course type (i.e., strategies reflecting the appropriate balance of theoretical components and practical applications for the particular type of course) and teaching strategies appropriate to the range of students' learning needs
– strategies for assessment and evaluation of student performance appropriate to the course type and to the students' range of learning needs
– a description of how the course incorporates considerations for program planning as appropriate and as described in the curriculum policy document(s) (e.g., planning related to education for exceptional students, the role of computer technology in the curriculum, career education, and cooperative education and other workplace experiences)
– the names of the textbook(s) and resource materials that are essential to the course

Information regarding access to these outlines and curriculum policy documents will be included in the annual school course calendar.

7.1.2 Locally Developed Courses

Locally developed courses are courses that meet educational needs not met by provincial curriculum policy documents. Such courses may be developed to accommodate educational and/or career preparation needs of students in a particular school or region; for example, courses for students in schools that offer school–work transition programs or college preparation programs. Such courses may also be developed for students receiving special education programs and services whose need for particular course content or for special preparation for further education or work cannot be met by a course based on provincial curriculum policy documents.

The criteria for the development and approval of locally developed courses are available from the ministry. All locally developed courses require the approval of the ministry, with the exception of religious education courses developed by Roman Catholic separate schools in accordance with section 7.1.3.1.

School boards will determine which courses will be developed locally and offered in their jurisdiction. The availability of staff, facilities, financial resources, instructional materials, and resources in the school must be considered in developing such courses. These courses must set high expectations for students. Course content,

the proposed range of teaching strategies, and assessment and evaluation procedures must be consistent with current ministry policy. Outlines of courses of study must be developed in accordance with the requirements given in section 7.1.1.

In order to meet the educational needs of their students, school boards may develop courses locally that can be counted as compulsory or as optional credits towards a diploma. (*See also section 5.5: Early Identification and Intervention Strategies for Students at Risk*.) The following requirements apply:

– *Compulsory credit courses.* A board may develop locally one course in English, one course in mathematics, and/or one course in science that can be counted as a compulsory credit in that discipline. Ministry approval of such locally developed courses will be valid for one year. A student may count no more than three such locally developed courses – one each in English, mathematics, and science – as compulsory credits. Locally developed courses may not replace any other compulsory credit courses.
– *Optional credit courses.* A board may develop courses locally that can be counted as optional credits in any discipline. Ministry approval of such locally developed courses will be valid for three years. School boards must, however, review these courses annually.

The above requirements also apply to inspected private schools.

Locally developed courses will be identified as such on the Ontario Student Transcript.

If universities, colleges, and/or employers recognize a Grade 11 or 12 locally developed course for admission purposes, this information must be stated clearly in the course calendar. It must also be made clear to students that some post-secondary institutions or employers may not recognize a locally developed course.

See sections 3.1.1: Compulsory Credits and 7.1.1: Courses of Study.

7.1.3 Religious Education Courses

7.1.3.1 Roman Catholic Separate Schools

Roman Catholic school boards are responsible for developing credit courses in religious education and the curriculum expectations related to them. A Roman Catholic board that develops such courses will not have to seek approval for them. Students may earn up to 4 credits in religious education.

7.1.3.2 Inspected Private Schools

Credit courses may be developed in religious education in inspected private schools. Students may earn up to 4 credits in religious education. These locally developed religious education courses require the approval of the ministry. *For the policy on the development of outlines of courses of study and the approval of such courses, see sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2.*

7.2 THE GUIDANCE AND CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The guidance and career education program is a vital and integral part of the secondary school program. Through the program, students will acquire the knowledge and skills that they need in order to learn effectively, to live and to work cooperatively and productively with a wide range of people, to set and pursue education and career goals, and to carry out their social responsibilities. The program will be delivered through various means, including classroom instruction, the teacher-adviser program, orientation and exit programs, completion of the annual education plan, career exploration activities, and individual assistance and short-term counselling.

The goals of the guidance and career education program are outlined in the policy document entitled *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999*. As stated in this document, students are expected to:

– understand the concepts related to lifelong learning, interpersonal relationships (including responsible citizenship), and career planning;
– develop learning skills, social skills, a sense of social responsibility, and the ability to formulate and pursue educational and career goals;
– apply this learning in their daily lives both at school and in the community.

To help students achieve these goals, the content of the guidance and career education program is organized into three areas of learning – student development (i.e., the development of habits and skills necessary for learning), interpersonal development (i.e., the development of knowledge and skills needed in getting along with others), and career development (i.e., the development of knowledge and skills needed for setting short- and long-term goals and for planning for the future).

Under the direction of the principal, each school will develop and implement a guidance and career education plan to ensure that students have access to the learning experiences, personal assistance, and information they need in order to achieve the program goals outlined in *Choices Into Action*, as well as the expectations given in the secondary school curriculum policy documents for guidance and career education.

The key features of the province's policy in the area of guidance and career education, which are described in detail in *Choices Into Action*, are as follows:

– clearly stated competencies for students in Grades 1 to 6, Grades 7 and 8, and Grades 9 to 12
– a range of career exploration activities in the community
– completion of the compulsory half-credit Career Studies course as a secondary school graduation requirement
– preparation of an annual education plan for each student, beginning in Grade 7 and continuing to the end of secondary school
– a teacher-adviser for students in Grades 7 to 11
– individual assistance and short-term counselling
– a program advisory team

– a program-effectiveness survey, conducted every three years, with recommendations for revising the program

The guidance and career education program plan will include strategies to ensure that students have access to the information they need in order to make informed decisions and to prepare for further education, apprenticeship programs, or the workplace.

7.3 LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Canada's two official languages, English and French, are the languages of instruction in Ontario schools. In addition to programs in English and French, programs in a variety of other languages are provided.

The following programs may be offered in English-language schools:

– programs in the language of instruction, including support programs
– second-language programs, that is, French as a second language (FSL) and/or Native languages
– programs in international languages and in classical languages (ancient Greek and Latin)

Language programs available in English-language schools are outlined below.

7.3.1 Programs in the Language of Instruction (English)

It is essential that students graduate with the ability to use language effectively for thinking, learning, and communicating. Schools are expected to provide language programs that will help all students develop proficiency in the language of instruction to enable them to complete the graduation requirements.

In English-language schools, learning opportunities to enable students to develop facility in English are to be integrated into the curriculum in all subject areas. If a student cannot understand English, a teacher may use a language other than English for instruction and to communicate with the student about matters of discipline and the management of the school. However, this provision is intended to apply only for the transitional period during which a student is learning English.

7.3.1.1 Support Programs in the Language of Instruction

English As a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD). Some students may enter an English-language school without the level of proficiency in English required for success. English as a second language (ESL) courses are intended to help these students develop proficiency in the language of instruction so that they can succeed in all subject areas at school, and later in postsecondary studies, apprenticeship programs, and the workplace. Other students may enter Ontario schools having had limited access to education. English literacy development (ELD) courses are intended to provide these students with an accelerated literacy program to give them the foundation for further study and for employment.

Courses are to be developed, for credit, from the ESL/ELD curriculum policy document, which outlines the program in ESL and ELD. The following considerations apply to credits earned through ESL/ELD courses:

– A student entering the Ontario secondary school system at any grade level may be given credit for a maximum of 3 ESL/ELD credits towards the 4 compulsory English credits

required for graduation. The remaining compulsory English credit(s) will be earned at the Grade 11 or Grade 12 level.

– To supplement the ESL/ELD credits, schools may provide classes for ESL/ELD students that combine ESL/ELD instruction with instruction in other subject areas (e.g., a class in geography that includes instruction in ESL/ELD). Such classes provide additional language practice while helping students acquire knowledge and skills in the subject area.

It should be noted that students may need to successfully complete additional English courses to meet the entrance requirements of some post-secondary education programs and of specific workplaces.

With assistance from teachers and as part of the process of developing their annual education plan, students will determine the number of ESL/ELD courses they need in order to participate fully in courses appropriate to their strengths, interests, and needs, and their intended postsecondary destination, with a level of literacy approaching that of a first-language speaker.

American Sign Language (ASL). For the instruction of deaf students, it may be necessary to use American Sign Language (ASL). If there are a number of deaf students in a school, boards may provide classes for these students in which both English and ASL are used as languages of instruction, as is done in the Provincial Schools for the deaf. Alternatively, boards may provide a sign-language (ASL) interpreter for individual deaf students who are taking regular classes.

7.3.2 Second-Language Programs

7.3.2.1 French As a Second Language (FSL)

To enable all students to have some knowledge of French by the end of secondary school, schools must offer at least core programs in French as a second language (FSL). To obtain a graduation diploma, students must earn one credit in French as a second language.

Across Ontario, students entering English-language secondary schools vary widely in their levels of proficiency in the French language. Some students from Ontario elementary schools may have taken core French; others may have taken extended or immersion French. Some students from outside Ontario, as well as Ontario students taking Native languages, may not have studied any French.

Where only a core French program is offered in secondary schools, students who have studied French in extended or immersion programs or who have a French-language background should be considered for advanced placement. However, students placed in higher grades on the basis of their level of proficiency must not receive credits for French courses that they have not taken.

Programs in French as a second language must be developed from the secondary school FSL curriculum policy document.

7.3.2.2 Native Languages

The provisions of the program in Native languages recognize that Native languages have a legitimate place in the curriculum of Ontario schools. Accordingly, school boards that provide a Native languages program must offer the program through to the end of secondary school.

The Native languages program is open to all students. For Native students, study of a Native language not only encourages them to use the language and develop their competence in it, but also strengthens their sense of cultural identity. For non-Native students, study of a Native language allows them to acquire competence in a Native language and gives them an opportunity to develop an appreciation of the language and culture under study.

Credit courses for Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Cree, Delaware, Ojibwe, and Oji-Cree must be developed from the secondary school curriculum policy documents for Native languages. Students placed in higher grades in Native language courses on the basis of their level of proficiency must not receive credits for Native language courses that they have not taken.

Those students who chose to take only a Native as a second language program in elementary school and who do not wish to take a French course in secondary school may substitute a Native language course for the compulsory credit in FSL.

7.3.3 Programs in International and Classical Languages

International languages are modern languages other than English or French. International language courses are offered to meet a number of student needs. For example, some students may wish to learn their ancestral language or to improve their skills in their first language; other students may wish to learn a third language in order to enhance their ability to succeed in a global economy.

In addition, the study of classical (ancient) Greek and Latin will enable students to develop an understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.

Courses in international languages and classical (ancient) Greek and Latin must be developed from the secondary school curriculum policy document for classical and international languages.

7.4 SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Specialized programs are programs that provide students with a particular curriculum focus to assist them in meeting diploma requirements and in making the transition to postsecondary destinations (i.e., university, college, apprenticeship programs, and the workplace). Schools may offer specialized programs to students in Grades 11 and 12 who are interested in pursuing a specific career or in taking a specific program at the postsecondary level. School boards must provide school–work transition programs for students who wish to go directly into the work force. In some instances, specialized programs may begin in Grade 10. Students who wish to enter a specific career could take a career preparation program. Students who do not have a specific career in mind but who wish to pursue their studies at the postsecondary level could take a university preparation or college preparation program. Students who wish to go directly into the work force could take a school–work transition program. Courses within specialized programs will be drawn from university preparation courses, university/college preparation courses, college preparation courses, workplace preparation courses, and open courses, as appropriate.

Specialized programs may be particularly helpful for meeting the needs of exceptional students that are outlined in the students' IEPs and related transition plans. Such programs may focus on the development of students' special strengths, for example, and may be effective in helping students achieve their goals. Modifications to the curriculum expectations, as well as provision of specialized services and other accommodations, can be built into a student's program.

Specialized programs may also include interdisciplinary studies programs, if they consist of courses from more than one discipline and if they require achievement of the additional curriculum expectations associated with interdisciplinary studies courses. For additional information on interdisciplinary studies programs, see the interdisciplinary studies curriculum policy document.

School staff should take the following points into consideration when developing and implementing specialized programs:

- Programs will generally be two years in duration and will begin in Grade 11. However, one-year programs could be offered for students in Grade 12, and, in some cases, three-year programs could be offered, beginning in Grade 10 (e.g., a school–work transition program in the area of travel and tourism).
- Programs may range in breadth and depth from programs consisting only of two related courses to programs consisting of several courses that give the students in-depth preparation for their postsecondary destinations.
- Programs may be developed for an individual student or for a group of students with similar interests and/or educational or career goals.
- Specialized programs should be developed and implemented in collaboration with postsecondary partners (university, college, trade-association, and workplace representatives) to ensure that the programs are relevant and that they adequately prepare students for their postsecondary destinations.
- Programs developed by a school or board, in conjunction with one or more postsecondary partners, may be expanded to include agreements involving additional schools within the board, schools within co-terminous boards, and additional local and regional postsecondary partners.
- Programs may provide students with the opportunity to obtain advanced standing in specific college courses, if secondary schools and colleges agree through, for example, an articulation agreement, that there is significant overlap between specific secondary school and college courses.
- Programs may provide students in apprenticeship and skills certificate programs with the opportunity to obtain advanced standing.
- One or more locally developed courses may be included in specialized programs to address students' interests and needs, as well as the needs of the local community. *See section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses*.
- Programs may include cooperative education and work experience placements to give students the opportunity to apply their learning in the workplace and to determine whether a particular educational or career plan is suitable for them.

See also section 6.2.2.2: Ontario Student Transcript for information on recording students' participation and achievement in specialized programs.

7.4.1 Career Preparation Programs

Schools may provide career preparation programs to prepare students for entry into careers that they have chosen to pursue upon completion of related postsecondary education. When students develop their annual education plan, they can design their individual career preparation programs. These specialized programs will provide students with opportunities to focus on fields of study that are related to specific careers – for example, careers in engineering technologies, health sciences, or entrepreneurship.

7.4.2 Postsecondary Education Preparation Programs

For those students who have not yet identified a specific career goal but who plan to pursue a postsecondary program in a college or university, schools may provide postsecondary education preparation programs. Courses may be grouped into programs to prepare students for postsecondary studies in particular disciplines.

7.4.2.1 University Preparation Programs

Schools may offer university preparation programs for students who plan to go directly to university from secondary school. When students develop their annual education plan, they can design their individual university preparation programs. These programs should include several university preparation and university/college preparation courses. Programs may be designed for individual students or for groups of students, and might focus on preparation for university studies in mathematics, science, languages, or fine arts.

7.4.2.2 College Preparation Programs

Schools may offer college preparation programs for students who plan to go directly to college from secondary school. College preparation programs will focus on increasing students' awareness of the range of college programs and related career opportunities, and will provide students with secondary school courses that have been linked to a number of college programs through, for example, articulation agreements. When students develop their annual education plan, they can design their individual college preparation programs. These programs should include several college preparation courses or university/college preparation courses for specific postsecondary programs. Programs might focus on preparing students for entry to one-year, two-year, and three-year college programs in business, applied arts, health sciences, and technology, and for related careers. It is essential that school and college faculty collaborate in the development and implementation of these programs.

7.4.3 School–Work Transition Programs

School boards must provide school–work transition programs for students intending to enter the work force directly after graduating from high school. School–work transition programs are intended to prepare students for employment or self-employment. Through these programs, students have the opportunity to complete high school graduation requirements, develop employability and industry-specific skills, and obtain experience in the workplace. Employers must be involved in the development and delivery of school–work transition programs.

School–work transition programs include both in-school and work-based experiences. These programs provide students with information about careers and occupations in different workplace sectors both in the in-school component of courses and through job shadowing or short-term work experience placements. Students participate in career exploration with an employer through a cooperative education placement to give both the students and the employer information they need to make a decision about the student's future.

In Grade 10, school–work transition programs may include a combination of academic, applied, and open courses, as well as opportunities to explore a variety of careers through job shadowing and short-term work experience placements. Students are introduced to a hands-on approach to learning about education, career, and employment opportunities.

In Grade 11, students receive more in-depth training in courses in which the in-school components and the cooperative education placements are directly related to their chosen career. This experience provides students with the background needed for selecting appropriate in-depth training in their final year of high school. In addition, school–work transition programs include related out-of-school training opportunities, which may be recognized by business and industry through certification.

In Grade 12, the focus of school–work transition programs sharpens. Students enter the final transition phase by participating in an intensive training program. During the first half of the school year, students continue to earn relevant in-school credits that are jointly developed and delivered by the school and workplaces in the community, and that enable the students to develop the range of skills required for direct entry into the work force. Students may receive additional training during and outside of regularly scheduled class time that will enable them to qualify for industry and/or provincial certification in their chosen field. During the second half of the school year, students focus on in-depth skills training in their chosen field, which takes place entirely in the workplace. In this way, students develop skills that are crucial for gaining employment while they complete their final diploma requirements.

Training opportunities should be relevant to the students' interests and aspirations but they also should be selected from employment sectors where job opportunities are known to exist. Curriculum must be implemented jointly by the school and partners in the community to ensure that the content is relevant and that students are properly prepared for employment. Given the unique employment possibilities in diverse regions across the province, boards may wish to develop some courses in collaboration with their communities and to include these locally developed courses in their school–work transition programs. *See section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses.*

School boards must establish procedures for developing and implementing their school–work transition programs. These programs must be developed and implemented in accordance with the following requirements:

- Students will earn credits to meet diploma requirements for graduation while taking these programs.
- Programs will prepare students to proceed directly from high school to employment or self-employment.

– Programs will combine in-school and work-based education and training through job shadowing, cooperative education, and/or work experience, and will allow students to take further specialized training in order to gain additional certification.
– Programs will emphasize the acquisition of employability skills, and these skills will be developed in both the in-school and out-of-school contexts.
– Programs must consist of an appropriate combination of courses that will prepare students to meet the requirements of a specific workplace or an apprenticeship program, and may include workplace preparation courses, college preparation courses, and open courses, as well as university preparation courses or locally developed courses.
– Schools must adopt a flexible approach to program development and implementation to enable individual students and groups of students to take the appropriate courses in Grades 9 to 12 and to gain the necessary workplace experiences related to those courses.
– School boards must establish and coordinate partnerships with employers in order to provide students with appropriate work placements and to ensure that programs reflect actual workplace expectations.
– School–work transition programs must be described in school course calendars, which must provide information on eligibility requirements and in-school and work-based options, as well as a clear sequence of program elements leading to graduation.
– Schools must track the progress of students enrolled in school–work transition programs.

School–work transition programs should also be provided for students who are identified as exceptional and for students who will benefit from specialized preparation for direct entry to the workplace. Programs for these students will take into account the student's strengths and needs (including the need for specialized services or other accommodations and/or for modifications to the curriculum expectations) that are outlined in the transition plan in the student's IEP.

In communities where local work-based opportunities are limited, school boards should develop and implement strategies to make use of available technologies such as the Internet, e-mail, and audio- and video-conferencing to increase students' access to relevant workplace experiences.

7.5 COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Students' education must be appropriate to their strengths, interests, and needs, and must prepare them for the future. To ensure that it does so, school boards must provide cooperative education programs and work experience to help students to acquire knowledge and skills and to apply this learning in practical situations. Such opportunities will help students see the relationship between the curriculum and the world beyond the school. This practical experience will help them decide what they would like to do and will assist them in making successful transitions to postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, or directly to the workplace. In some situations, students in Grades 9 and 10 may benefit from cooperative education and work experience.

Courses of all types and in all disciplines may be offered through the cooperative education mode. Work experience, when offered, is part of a credit course and provides students with a learning opportunity in the workplace for a limited period of time – that is, from one to four weeks. Cooperative education programs and work experience will be developed and implemented in accordance with ministry policy stated in *Co-operative Education: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 1989*.

Cooperative education programs and work experience should be provided for exceptional students who have expressed a desire for them. In developing a cooperative education program or a program containing work experience for a student, teachers will take into account the student's strengths and needs (including the need for specialized services or other accommodations and/or for modifications to the curriculum expectations) that are outlined in the student's IEP.

Planned learning experiences in the community can enhance the school program, familiarize students and teachers with current workplace practices, increase students' awareness of career opportunities, provide concrete applications of curriculum, and give students and teachers a better understanding of employers' expectations. Such programs complement students' academic programs and are valuable for all students, whatever their postsecondary destination. For students who intend to enter the work force directly from school, such programs provide personal contacts with potential employers. For students who intend to enter college or university, the programs provide information that they will find helpful in making educational and career choices. For exceptional students fourteen years of age and older, planned learning experiences in the community need to be considered in the development of the transition plan in the student's IEP.

Cooperative education and work experience will be available to students in the following forms:

– school-arranged experiences that are tied to the curriculum, including work experience placements in the community and in-school work simulations
– cooperative education programs and work experience as described in *Co-operative Education: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 1989*
– participation in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
– other structured school–work transition programs, such as Bridges, that combine school-based and work-based education and training for students planning to enter the work force directly from secondary school

Schools may expand these programs in the following ways to provide opportunities for all students:

– Programs may be developed for students who have previously not been involved in cooperative education.
– A one- to two-week work experience component may be added in all types of courses.
– Placements for students may be found in new employment sectors.
– Schools may develop ways of making use of the resources in the community for educational purposes (e.g., use the Internet to seek information from employers in the community to help them complete their assignments).

All forms of cooperative education and work experience will include the following:

- pre-placement instruction (e.g., instruction on topics such as interviews, résumés, health and safety in the workplace, and legal and harassment issues)
- provision of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage, as described in Policy/ Program Memorandum No. 76A, "Workers' Compensation Coverage for Students in Work Education Programs", December 6, 1995
- a learning plan (including assessment criteria) based on the curriculum expectations of courses in the provincial curriculum policy documents and on the expectations of participating employers
- assessment of students' progress through regular monitoring of their learning in the workplace setting
- opportunities for students to analyse their out-of-school experiences and to integrate them with their in-school learning
- evaluation of students' learning to determine whether course expectations have been met

7.6 THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING CENTRE (CORRESPONDENCE COURSES)

Secondary school credit courses are available through the ministry's Independent Learning Centre (ILC). Information about eligibility, enrolment procedures, and course offerings may be found in the current edition of the *Independent Learning Centre Student Guide* and through the ILC website. Courses offered will be courses in the curriculum policy documents and will enable students to fulfil the requirements for a diploma. *See also section 7.7: Distance Education.*

7.7 DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education courses are credit courses that are offered by schools through various technological means, such as teleconferencing, the Internet, and video-conferencing. By making distance education courses available to students, schools can provide them with a wider range of program choices. These courses are designed to enable students to participate actively in a course despite being at a distance from the school that is offering the course. Information on distance education courses is available through school boards.

7.8 SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS

Some school boards may wish to establish secondary schools that specialize in areas such as the performing arts, languages, vocational education, pure and applied sciences, technological education, apprenticeship and workplace preparation, or business studies. A secondary school may offer programs in subjects in which there is small enrolment – for example, programs in some languages – and these programs may serve several schools. However, a secondary school should not specialize to the point where it cannot offer the full range of courses that students need in order to obtain a secondary school diploma.

7.8.1 Alternative Schools

School boards may find it necessary to establish alternative secondary schools to provide an option for some students who have educational needs that cannot be met in an appropriate way in their existing secondary schools, and/or to respond to needs expressed in the community. An alternative school may be established, for example, for students at risk of not completing their diploma requirements. It can provide these

students with opportunities to develop the skills and confidence they need to re-enter the regular system. An alternative school can also benefit students who wish to take an individualized program.

7.9 SMALL AND ISOLATED SCHOOLS

It is essential that all schools provide courses for all students who plan to go to college or university, to take further training through apprenticeship, or to go directly into the workplace from secondary school. However, small and remote secondary schools may experience difficulty in providing a full range of courses to meet the needs of all of their students. School boards are therefore encouraged to consider ways of overcoming various obstacles to providing full programs to students. Boards with small schools should consider making cooperative arrangements, such as arrangements to share resources among their schools and/or with other school boards, in order to make the best use of laboratories, libraries, and other specialized facilities. In the case of remote schools, sharing and cooperating with neighbouring secondary schools may not be possible, but boards should encourage the sharing of resources between elementary and secondary schools within their jurisdiction.

Possible strategies to alleviate the problems of providing a range of courses to students could include:

- providing opportunities for staff to acquire additional qualifications in different areas;
- offering different types of courses and courses at different grades within the same class (*see section 7.10: Multitype and Multigrade Classes);*
- supplementing the school program with ILC correspondence courses or with courses taken through private study;
- offering courses through distance education and other forms of electronic course delivery, including closed-circuit television;
- using continuing education programs to expand the range of subjects;
- offering courses through the cooperative education mode of delivery to enable students to gain more credits for those courses;
- implementing expanded use of independent and private-study methods of learning.

7.10 MULTITYPE AND MULTIGRADE CLASSES

In secondary schools that are small or highly specialized in their program offerings, it may not be feasible to offer separate classes in all subjects for the different types of courses. In such cases, a single class may be organized to serve more than one group of students, each group taking a different type of course in the same subject and grade.

Where only a few students in each grade are taking different types of courses in the same subject, groups of students in different grades may also be combined in one class.

In such combined classes, the course objectives, the expectations, and the evaluation procedures for each type of course and for each grade must be clearly outlined, so that students, parents, and teachers are aware of the curriculum expectations for each credit course.

7.11 PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

Principals are required to establish procedures to ensure that teachers know which students in their classes are at risk of not completing the requirements for a diploma. School boards must ensure that schools develop and implement a range of programs to encourage students to develop their potential and to achieve the expectations to the best of their ability. Students gain confidence as they develop competence in their areas of interest and as they see the positive results of hard work. In addition to encouraging students in their academic work, schools need to ensure that students at risk are given other kinds of support – for example, students could be encouraged to participate in aspects of school life that interest them, and boards and schools could develop partnerships with community organizations that can respond to a range of student needs.

It is essential that boards develop early identification and intervention strategies to help students at risk. Boards must also ensure that schools make use of appropriate programs and services to help their students, which include the following:

– the teacher-adviser program
– the annual education plan
– individual assistance and short-term counselling
– use of an IPRC, as required
– formulation of an IEP, as appropriate (including the formulation of a modified or alternative program for an exceptional student)
– remedial assistance for students who do not pass the provincial secondary school literacy test
– cooperative education programs and work experience
– school–work transition programs
– Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP) programs (*see appendix 7*)

Boards may also provide the following:

– specialized programs (*see section 7.4*)
– opportunities for apprenticeship through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
– remediation in various subject areas

See also section 5.5: Early Identification and Intervention Strategies for Students at Risk.

7.12 SPECIAL EDUCATION

All students identified as exceptional must have access to an education that will enable them to develop the essential knowledge and skills they need in order to participate in the life of Ontario's communities. The Education Act and regulations made under the act require school boards to provide exceptional students with special education programs and services that are appropriate for their needs. Specific procedures are set out in the regulation governing the identification and placement of exceptional students. The regulation also provides for the regular review of the identification and placement of a student and for the appeal of identification and/or placement decisions with which parents disagree.

The needs of exceptional students are identified by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). Upon receiving a written request from a parent of a student, the principal of the school must refer the student to an IPRC for a decision as to whether the student should

be identified as exceptional and, if so, what his or her placement should be. The principal may also, on written notice to the parent(s), refer the student to an IPRC. The parent(s), as well as a student who is sixteen years of age or older, can also request that the IPRC discuss proposals for ways in which the student's needs can be met. On the basis of these discussions, the IPRC can recommend special education programs and services that it considers to be appropriate for the student.

The regulation governing the identification and placement of exceptional students provides that an IPRC will, before considering the option of placing a student in a special education class, consider whether placement in a regular class, with appropriate special education services, would meet the student's needs and is consistent with parental preferences. For students whose needs cannot be met entirely in the regular classroom, a range of placement options must be available. These options include placement in a special education class for the entire day; placement in a special education class with partial integration; placement in a regular class with withdrawal to receive instruction outside the classroom by a qualified special education teacher for part of the day; and referral to a provincial committee for consideration of eligibility for admission to a Provincial or Demonstration School.

When an IPRC identifies a student as exceptional, the principal must ensure that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for that student is developed and maintained. An IEP must be developed within thirty days of the placement of an exceptional student in a particular program. The parents must be provided with a copy; the student must also be given a copy if he or she is sixteen years of age or older. *For details on the development of the IEP, see sections 5.4.1: Developing the Student's Individual Education Plan and 5.4.2: Developing the Student's Transition Plan.*

An IEP may also be prepared for students with special needs who are receiving special education programs and/or services, but who have not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC.

Exceptional students, as well as other students who are not identified as exceptional but who have an IEP and are receiving special education programs and services, should be given every opportunity to achieve the curriculum expectations set out in the provincial curriculum policy documents. For most students with an IEP, the curriculum expectations for a course will be the same as or similar to the course expectations outlined in the appropriate provincial curriculum policy document, except that accommodations such as specialized supports or services will be provided to help the student achieve the expectations. The student's achievement of the curriculum expectations will be assessed in accordance with the discipline-specific assessment policies given in the provincial curriculum policy documents.

For some students with an IEP, curriculum expectations for a course will be *selected* from the appropriate provincial curriculum policy document and *modified* to meet the student's needs (these modifications can include changes to the grade level of the expectations). In addition, specialized services or other accommodations may be provided to help the student

achieve the expectations. The student's achievement of the modified learning expectations will be assessed in accordance with the discipline-specific assessment policies given in the provincial curriculum policy documents. The principal will determine whether achievement of the modified expectations will indicate successful completion of the course, and will decide whether the student will be eligible to receive a credit for the course. The principal will communicate his or her decision to the parents and the student.

A small number of students may require *alternative* expectations that are not derived from the expectations in the provincial curriculum policy documents. A student's achievement of these expectations will not be assessed according to the assessment policies in the provincial curriculum policy documents, but in relation to the expectations set out in the student's IEP. The student will not be granted a credit for the successful completion of a course that consists of alternative expectations.

See also section 5.4: Program Planning for Exceptional Students and appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students.

7.13 ANTIDISCRIMINATION EDUCATION

To ensure that all students in the province have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, the education system must be free from discrimination and must provide all students with a safe and secure environment so that they can participate fully and responsibly in the educational experience.

The implementation of antidiscrimination principles in education influences all aspects of school life. It promotes a school climate that encourages all students to work to high standards, affirms the worth of all students, and helps them strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. It encourages staff and students alike to value and show respect for diversity in the school and the wider society. It requires schools to adopt measures to provide a safe environment for learning, free from harassment of all types, violence, and expressions of hate.

In putting their commitment to antidiscrimination in education into practice, schools should work to create an inclusive learning environment in which the school's physical appearance and the schedule of activities of the school acknowledge and reflect the diversity within the school system and the wider society. The diversity within the community could be acknowledged, for example, through pictures, posters, and decorations for cultural events, as well as in news items or announcements in the school's opening exercises.

Expectations relating to antidiscrimination education, violence prevention, and Native education have been incorporated in the provincial curriculum where relevant. When planning their programs, teachers will base their decisions on the needs of students, taking into consideration their students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and learning styles. Learning activities should be designed to help students develop respect for human rights and dignity, and to develop a sense of personal, social, and civic responsibility. These activities should reflect

diverse points of view and experiences, and should enable students to learn about the contributions of a variety of peoples, in the past and the present, to the development of Canada. Students should be encouraged to think critically about aspects of their own and their peers' backgrounds, and to become more sensitive to the experiences and perceptions of others.

Students entering the system should be given the support they need to adjust to the new environment and to acquire competence in the language of instruction if they are not familiar with the language of instruction. Teachers, including guidance counsellors and teacher-advisers, should give support to students that is appropriate to their strengths, needs, and backgrounds so that all students have a chance to succeed.

Schools and individual teachers should also work to ensure that school-community interaction reflects the diversity in the local community and the wider society. As part of their ongoing efforts to develop meaningful partnerships, schools should enable their staff members to participate in professional development activities that will enhance their ability to work with parents and community members from the diverse groups represented in the community.

7.14 TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technological education in secondary schools includes a broad range of courses that emphasize concepts of design and the design process, the study and use of information technology and computer programming, the use and functions of different systems, and the development and use of tools (from calipers to computer-assisted design software), machines, materials, and techniques.

Technological education courses will challenge students to develop an understanding of the relevance of technology and its applications for individuals, society, and the environment. Ontario secondary school graduates are expected to be technologically literate, which means they should be able to understand and apply technological concepts, to use computers in various applications, and to analyse the implications of a wide range of technologies for individuals and society.

In Grades 9 and 10, the courses described in the provincial curriculum policy document are designed to provide students with an introduction to technology and to allow them to explore various forms of technology and develop an understanding of the impact of technology. In Grades 11 and 12, technological education courses are more focused on specific careers, and include courses to assist students in preparing for their postsecondary destinations – university, college, apprenticeship programs, and the workplace.

Participation in information technology courses is of particular importance for some exceptional students and should be taken into account in program planning. Information technology can support the different learning styles of exceptional students, and can provide greater and swifter access to information, particularly the printed word, than was previously possible. For example, voice output systems not only provide access to written materials for individuals who cannot see text on a screen display, but also support effective use of technology by individuals with limited reading skills. Text display of speech output can help students develop literacy

and learn new languages, and can provide access to materials for individuals who cannot hear. The needs of exceptional students who wish to take a technology course must be taken into account by school boards in the purchase of technology that is to be used in the course.

7.15 EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Extracurricular programs include intramural and interschool programs, school clubs, recreational activities, and extracurricular activities. To meet the needs of a wide variety of students whose abilities and interests vary greatly, schools should attempt to provide many different kinds of programs and activities. Extracurricular programs provide students with opportunities for enrichment, the development of social skills and independence, and practice in making decisions and handling responsibility. These activities also allow for the development of a variety of positive relationships between teachers and students, and among different groups of students.

Schools should assess their extracurricular activities on a regular basis, to ensure that they continue to reflect the widely varying abilities and interests of the students and staff, and that they offer equal opportunities for male and female students. Students and members of the community should participate in this assessment process.

Schools need to draw on community resources in order to provide varied and interesting experiences and opportunities in the extracurricular program. In doing so, however, they should be familiar with board policies concerning bringing parents and other adults in the community into the school to assist in the program.

7.16 PARTNERSHIPS

The emphasis in the secondary school program on high standards, curriculum relevance, practical applications of learning, cooperative education, work experience, and school–work transition programs makes it essential for school boards and schools to extend and strengthen their partnerships with colleges and universities, employers, and the community. The ministry, school boards, and schools all have an important role to play in developing partnerships and encouraging the active collaboration of community partners.

The ministry provides leadership in establishing policy for the development of partnerships between the education community and representatives of employing organizations, at the provincial and local levels. Potential partners include national and provincial business and industry associations and councils, professional and trade associations, parent associations, volunteer umbrella groups, community agencies, and chambers of commerce. The ministry has included representatives from secondary schools, universities, colleges, and workplaces in the development of secondary school curriculum policy documents to ensure that curricula will prepare students adequately for their post-secondary destinations.

School boards will develop policies and procedures, in accordance with provincial policies, for involving community partners in the planning and delivery of guidance and career education programs, cooperative education programs and work experience opportunities, school–work transition programs, and locally developed

courses. They should also work with coterminous school boards and employers to ensure sufficient opportunities for student work placements and, where circumstances require, alternative opportunities, such as in-school work simulations. Potential partners include industry-education councils, local training and adjustment boards, volunteer organizations, local chambers of commerce, community agencies, and local chapters of professional and trade associations.

Schools need to work with their community partners to develop and deliver appropriate cooperative education programs, work experience opportunities, specialized programs, school–work transition programs, and guidance and career education programs for their students. Potential partners in these endeavours include local youth employment agencies, school councils, home and school associations, volunteer organizations, and local employers such as businesses, hospitals, social service agencies, and seniors' homes. Schools should also continue to play their traditional role in reaching out to the community to sponsor and/or initiate community-based learning experiences for students. These experiences may be athletic or cultural activities, activities related to community concerns, or visits or excursions to sites of special interest in the community. The diploma requirement of community involvement further encourages students and schools to participate in a variety of community-related activities. Learning experiences in the community benefit students in a wide variety of ways, helping them to develop understanding of others and respect and care for their rights and needs. Such experiences also encourage students to use local recreational facilities, to preserve and protect the local environment, and to take an interest in local concerns.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The ministry is responsible for:

– establishing provincial policy for secondary education, including the curriculum expectations for courses and the requirements for granting the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, the Ontario Secondary School Certificate, and the Certificate of Accomplishment;

– establishing a framework for the development of partnerships among the education sectors and representatives of employing organizations, at the provincial and local levels;

– facilitating appropriate system-wide links between secondary schools, colleges, and universities;

– coordinating the curriculum development process at the provincial level in close collaboration with school boards, universities, colleges, and employing and volunteer organizations;

– working with the Ontario College of Teachers on teacher education matters related to secondary education;

– providing funding and policy direction to the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) on the province's testing programs, including the provincial secondary school literacy test;

– developing provincial policy on assessment, evaluation, reporting, and remediation;

– developing provincial policy on the Ontario Student Transcript;

– developing provincial policy on secondary school Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) procedures at the provincial and local levels;

– developing and/or revising, in consultation with educators and the broader community, provincial policy on guidance and career education, cooperative education, work experience, school–work transition programs, and apprenticeship programs;

– ensuring that school boards implement the secondary school policies and programs;
– inspecting secondary private schools on request.

8.2 SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards are responsible for:

– implementing and complying with provincial policy on education in secondary schools;
– implementing provincial policies on guidance and career education, cooperative education, work experience, school–work transition programs, and apprenticeship programs;
– establishing procedures by which the community is involved in developing and implementing cooperative education programs, work experience opportunities, school–work transition programs, apprenticeship programs, and guidance and career education programs;
– establishing procedures by which representatives from colleges, universities, and employing organizations collaborate in the development and implementation of relevant specialized programs, school–work transition programs, and locally developed courses, and in the implementation of curriculum at the school level;
– providing opportunities for teachers to cooperate in the development of classroom materials that can be shared among schools across the province;
– enabling teachers to engage in professional development activities to ensure the effective implementation of provincial policies affecting secondary schools;
– working cooperatively with the EQAO to implement the province's testing programs;
– providing remedial assistance for students who do not pass the provincial secondary school literacy test;
– implementing provincial policy on the Ontario Student Transcript;
– developing and implementing local PLAR policies and procedures that are consistent with provincial policy;
– providing opportunities for school councils to be involved in planning for the implementation of provincial policies affecting secondary schools;
– reviewing the allocation of resources to determine appropriate support for the implementation of the secondary school policies and programs.

Appendix 1: Implementation Schedule

Policy	Implementation Date
Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9–12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999	Implementation to begin in the 1999–2000 school year for students starting Grade 9 in the 1999–2000 school year (OSS diploma requirements apply)
Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999	Implementation to begin in the 1999–2000 school year
Annual Education Plan	Implementation to be phased in for all students, as follows: Grades 7 to 9 in the 1999–2000 school year, Grade 10 in the 2000–2001 school year, Grade 11 in the 2001–2 school year, and Grade 12 in the 2002–3 school year
Teacher-Adviser Program	Implementation to be phased in for all students, as follows: Grades 7 to 9 in the 1999–2000 school year, Grade 10 in the 2000–2001 school year, Grade 11 in the 2001–2 school year
Guidance and Career Education Program Effectiveness Survey	The first effectiveness survey to be implemented in the 2001–2 school year, following implementation of the guidance and career education program in the 1999–2000 school year
Ontario Student Transcript format and policy on full disclosure	Implementation in September 1999 for all students

Policy	Implementation Date
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	Implementation to begin for students in the 2001–2 school year and for mature students in the 2003–4 school year (see the Glossary for definitions of *student* and *mature student*) **For students** Students may challenge for credit only for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses. The opportunity to challenge for credit begins one year after implementation of the new curriculum. Thus the opportunity to challenge for credit for Grade 10 courses begins in 2001–2, Grade 11 courses in 2002–3, and Grade 12 courses in 2003–4. Equivalency for placement purposes will continue to be determined by the principal. **For mature students** Mature students may challenge for credit only for Grade 11 and 12 courses. The opportunity to challenge for credit begins in the 2003–4 school year. Prior to the beginning of the 2003–4 school year, all mature students working towards a diploma (i.e., OSSD, SSGD) will have their credits assessed and granted according to the equivalent standing for mature students process described in OSIS, 1989. Beginning with the 2003–4 school year, all mature students working towards a diploma (i.e., OSSD, SSGD) will have their credits assessed and granted according to the PLAR process described in OSS, 1999.

Appendix 2: Transition From OSIS to OSS

Beginning in the 1999–2000 school year, all students entering Grade 9 will work towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) under OSS. However, those students who began Grade 9 before the 1999–2000 school year will have the opportunity to complete their diploma requirements under OSIS (*see appendix 3*).

Secondary school students who are trying to complete the OSS diploma requirements may take courses developed as part of the OSIS curriculum guidelines. Principals should ensure that such students understand and acknowledge that meeting OSIS diploma requirements is not necessarily equivalent to satisfying OSS diploma requirements (*see section 3: Diploma Requirements and Related Procedures, and appendix 3*). This option provides students with a temporary opportunity that will no longer exist after OSS and its corresponding curriculum policy documents have been completely implemented in all grades.

Similarly, students following the OSIS diploma requirements may take courses developed as part of the OSS diploma requirements. Principals should ensure that such students understand and acknowledge that meeting OSS diploma requirements is not necessarily equivalent to satisfying OSIS diploma requirements (*see section 3: Diploma Requirements and Related Procedures, and appendix 3*). This option provides students with a temporary opportunity that will no longer exist after the OSIS policy and its corresponding curriculum guideline have been completely discontinued in all grades.

Appendix 3: Summary of Diploma Requirements

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATION DIPLOMA (SSGD), 1974–1984

Note: The following table and all of the notes are taken from and refer to *Circular H.S.1, 1979–81*.

Minimum number of credits	School year in which the student began or will begin the first year of a secondary school program				Notes
	1974–75 1975–76 1976–77	1977–78	1978–79	1979–80 1980–81 1981–82 1982–83 1983–84	a
for an SSGD including, within this total, the following:	27	27	27	27	b
– from each area of study	3	3	3	3	c
– from English studies	4	2	2		d
– from Canadian studies	2				e
– in required subjects:					
Intermediate Division					f
– English (or anglais)		2	2	2	g
– mathematics		2	2	2	g
– science		1	1	1	g
– Canadian history			1	1	g
– Canadian geography			1	1	g
– Canadian history *or* – Canadian history and Canadian geography		2 or 1 each			g
Senior Division					
– English (or anglais)				2	g

Notes

a) In this document the school year is considered as beginning on September 1 of one year and ending on August 31 of the following year.

b) Students should be encouraged to enrich their programs by taking more than the minimum twenty-seven credit courses.

c) See section 4.1 for a description of these areas of study.

d) See appendix B.

e) See appendix C.

f) For a modification of the required-subjects policy for students in occupational programs, see section 8.1.

g) See appendix A.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OSSD) UNDER OSIS, 1984–99

Note: The following table and all of the notes are taken from and refer to *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7–12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements, 1984*. Students who began their secondary school program between 1984 and the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year will work towards the OSSD under OSIS.

Minimum number of credits	School year in which the student began or will begin the first year of a secondary school program	Notes
	1984–85 onwards	a
for an OSSD including,within this total, the following:	30	b,c
– in required subjects:		d
– English (or français)	5	e
– French as a second language (or anglais)	1	
– mathematics	2	
– science	2	
– Canadian geography	1	
– Canadian history	1	
– additional social science (Senior)	1	f
– arts	1	g
– physical and health education	1	
– business studies or technological studies	1	h

Notes

a) In this document the school year is considered as beginning on or after September 1 of one year and ending on August 31 of the following year.

b) Students may choose to take more than thirty credits, especially students who are incorporating OACs into their programs.

c) The listing of subjects under areas of study no longer applies.

d) For exemptions and substitutions for non-exceptional pupils, see section 4.10, note (d). For exemptions and substitutions for exceptional pupils, see section 4.10, note (e).

e) See section 4.10, note (b).

f) See appendix B.

g) See appendix B.

h) See appendix B.

Appendix 4: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits

1. A student who has successfully completed the requirements for one of the following may count a maximum of one non-Grade 12 university preparation credit towards the OSSD *in addition to* any other non-Grade 12 university preparation music credits earned in the school:
   - Grade VIII Practical and Grade II Rudiments of the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto
   - Grade VIII Practical and Grade IV Theory of Conservatory Canada, London
   - Collegial I Practical and Collegial I Theory of any conservatory of music in the province of Quebec
   - Grade VII Practical and Grade V Theory of Trinity College of Music, London, England
   - Grade VII Practical and Grade VI Theory of the Royal Schools of Music, London, England

2. A student who has successfully completed the requirements for one of the following may count a maximum of one Grade 12 university preparation credit towards the OSSD *in addition to* a maximum of one other Grade 12 university preparation credit in music earned in the school:
   - Grade IX Practical and Grade III Harmony of the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto
   - Grade IX Practical and Grade V Theory of Conservatory Canada, London
   - Collegial II Practical and Collegial II Theory of any conservatory of music in the province of Quebec
   - Grade VIII Practical and Grade VI Theory of Trinity College of Music, London, England
   - Grade VIII Practical and Grade VIII Theory of the Royal Schools of Music, London, England

Notes

a) The term *practical* refers to any musical instrument on which performance is examined. It includes voice (i.e., singing), but not speech arts.

b) The mark credited to the student is calculated by averaging the marks that the student has earned in the practical component *and* in rudiments *or* theory *or* harmony, as the case may be.

c) A music credit obtained through a certificate granted by a conservatory of music may not be used to meet the compulsory credit requirement in the arts.

d) A maximum of two credits, as indicated above, may be awarded to students taking music programs outside the school. A student awarded two music credits in this manner may *not* earn additional Grade 10 to 12 music credits through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition challenge or equivalency processes.

Appendix 5: Compulsory Credits

The courses that meet the compulsory credit requirements are given below. They are described in the Ontario secondary curriculum policy documents in the series *The Ontario Curriculum*, of 1999 and 2000.

English *(4 credits in English, 1 credit per grade)*
Students must earn four credits in English, one credit in each of the four years of secondary school. The courses that meet the compulsory credit requirements for English are the following: Grade 9 English, Grade 10 English, Grade 11 English, and Grade 12 English. These courses are described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for English.

Students entering the Ontario secondary school system at any grade level may use up to a maximum of three credits in English as a second language (ESL) or English literacy development (ELD) as substitutes for up to a maximum of three of the four compulsory credits in English. All ESL/ELD courses used in this way must be courses that are described in the secondary curriculum policy document for ESL/ELD. (*See section 7.3.1.1: Support Programs in the Language of Instruction*.)

Students who take Contemporary Aboriginal Authors (Grade 11), which is described in the secondary curriculum policy document for Native studies, may use the credit earned for this course to meet the Grade 11 English compulsory credit requirement.

French As a Second Language *(1 credit)*
Students must earn one credit in French as a second language (FSL). They may take any course described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for FSL to meet this requirement.

Students who have taken Native as a second language (NSL) instead of FSL in elementary school and who wish to take Native languages instead of FSL in secondary school may use the credit earned for the NL1 or NL2 course described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for Native languages as a substitute for the compulsory credit in FSL.

Mathematics *(3 credits, including at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)*
Students must earn three credits in mathematics. At least one of these credits must be in Grade 11 or 12 mathematics. Students will select the courses they need from among the courses described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for mathematics to meet the compulsory credit requirements for mathematics.

Science *(2 credits)*
Students must earn two credits in science. They may take any course described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for science to meet the compulsory credit requirements for science.

Canadian History *(1 credit)*
Students must earn one credit in Canadian history. The course that must be taken to satisfy this requirement is Canadian History in the Twentieth-Century (Grade 10), which is described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for Canadian and world studies.

Canadian Geography *(1 credit)*
Students must earn one credit in Canadian geography. The course that must be taken to satisfy this requirement is Canadian Geography (Grade 9), which is described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for Canadian and world studies.

The Arts *(1 credit)*
Students must earn one credit in the arts. They may take any course described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for the arts to meet the compulsory credit requirement for the arts.

Students who take Expressing Aboriginal Cultures (Grade 9), which is described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for Native studies, may use the credit earned for this course to meet the compulsory credit requirement for the arts.

Health and Physical Education *(1 credit)*
Students must earn one credit in health and physical education. They may take any course described in the secondary curriculum policy documents for health and physical education to meet the compulsory credit requirement for health and physical education.

Civics and Career Studies *(1 credit: .5 in Civics, .5 in Career Studies)*
Students must earn one-half credit in civics. The course that must be taken to satisfy this requirement is Civics (Grade 10), which is described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for Canadian and world studies.

Students must earn one-half credit in career studies. The course that must be taken to satisfy this requirement is Career Studies (Grade 10), which is described in the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum policy document for guidance and career education.

Group 1 *(for 1 additional compulsory credit)*
Students must earn *one* additional credit in English, *or* a third language, *or* social sciences and the humanities, *or* Canadian and world studies. The possible credits are as follows:

- one credit for an additional course in English from the secondary curriculum policy documents for English (i.e., one credit *in addition to* the four compulsory credits in English, or the allowable substitutions, described on page 71)
- one credit for a course in a classical or an international language from the secondary curriculum policy documents for classical and international languages
- one credit for a course in social sciences or the humanities from the secondary curriculum policy document for social sciences and the humanities

– one credit for an additional course in Canadian and world studies from the secondary curriculum policy documents for Canadian and world studies *or* one credit in Native studies from the secondary curriculum policy documents for Native studies (i.e., one credit *in addition to* the compulsory credits in Canadian geography, Canadian history, and civics and career studies described on page 72)

Group 2 *(for 1 additional compulsory credit)*
Students must earn *one* additional credit in health and physical education, *or* the arts, *or* business studies. The possible credits are as follows:

– one credit for an additional course in health and physical education from the secondary curriculum policy documents for health and physical education (i.e., one credit *in addition to* the compulsory credit in health and physical education described on page 72)
– one credit for an additional course in any one of the arts (dance, drama, media arts, music, visual arts) from the secondary curriculum policy documents for the arts (i.e., one credit *in addition to* the compulsory credit in the arts described on page 72)
– one credit for a course in business studies from the secondary curriculum policy documents for business studies

Group 3 *(for 1 additional compulsory credit)*
Students must earn *one* additional credit in science or technological education. The possible credits are as follows:

– one credit for an additional course in science, which must be a Grade 11 or 12 course from the Grade 11 and 12 curriculum policy document for science (i.e., one credit in Grade 11 or 12 science *in addition to* the two compulsory credits in science described on page 72)
– one credit for a Grade 9, Grade 10, Grade 11, *or* Grade 12 course in technological education from the secondary curriculum policy documents for technological education

See also section 7.1.2: Locally Developed Courses.

Appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students

TEACHING APPROACHES

A variety of teaching approaches may need to be used to help exceptional students achieve the learning expectations of their courses. Examples of such approaches may include:

– using special resources, such as reading material consistent with students' reading levels and learning styles; audiotapes of difficult chapters or units (to help students understand material and answer questions on it); videotapes, audiotapes, and other audio-visual materials (to give breadth and depth to learning experiences); learning resources that provide direct experiences of seeing and touching (i.e., tactile materials); a variety of learning tools (e.g., calculators, adapted computers); enrichment units, additional readings, and other opportunities (e.g., problems to solve) that extend learning;

– using a variety of teaching-learning strategies, such as team teaching; special interest groupings for research projects; peer partners, collaborative groups, and cross-age tutoring; mentorship programs; and independent study plans;

– using the library resource room as an alternative to the classroom;

– collaborating with resource teachers, teacher-librarians, and other professionals;

– using different areas of the classroom for different purposes (e.g., independent learning, group work);

– consulting with parents about providing appropriate study conditions at home;

– providing for those students who may need more or less time to complete assignments or achieve the learning expectations;

– providing alternative ways of completing tasks or presenting information (e.g., through taped answers, demonstrations, dramatizations, role play);

– simplifying the language of instruction;

– providing opportunities for performance in areas of special talent;

– providing all students with strategies for understanding and accepting exceptional students and integrating them into the regular classroom;

CURRICULUM

Curriculum content may need to be modified to help exceptional students achieve the learning expectations of their courses. Examples of such content changes could include:

– providing a module on learning and study skills to help students acquire such skills as formulating a work plan, taking notes, reading, and studying;

– providing additional material to reinforce learning, if necessary;

– providing additional material to extend learning, if appropriate;

– providing modified curriculum expectations or alternative expectations (i.e., expectations that are alternatives to the provincial curriculum expectations), as appropriate, to ensure that the individual needs of exceptional students are met;
– modifying the delivery of cooperative education programs for exceptional students;
– providing exceptional students with opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills they need to make a successful transition to post-secondary education, apprenticeship programs, work, or living independently in the community;
– providing opportunities for exceptional students to acquire self-advocacy skills.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES

Assessment procedures and strategies may also need to be altered to assess the extent to which exceptional students are achieving the learning expectations of their courses. Examples of such alterations to procedures and strategies may include:

– changing the time requirements for completing assignments or assessment tasks;
– changing the format of the assessment materials;
– providing a quiet environment in which assessment may take place;
– simplifying test instructions and the language of questions;
– providing for the use of scribes, tape recorders, typewriters, or word processors, or allowing oral responses;
– allowing students to retake classroom tests or redo classroom assignments to improve their performance;
– providing alternative homework assignments;
– basing classroom assessment on the full range of students' work (e.g., portfolios, interviews, demonstrations, dramatizations, journals, peer evaluations, self-evaluations).

Appendix 7: Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP)

The parent(s) of an eligible student can apply for the student's release from regular, full-time school attendance so that the student can participate in an alternative learning experience that is considered suitable for him or her by a committee established in accordance with the regulation governing the Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP) program. To be eligible for a SALEP program, a student must be fourteen or fifteen years of age and enrolled in a secondary school program leading to a graduation diploma or certificate. Students who are enrolled in programs in board-sponsored schools, such as schools for the arts and academies, are also eligible for a SALEP program. However, students in Provincial and Demonstration Schools, in care and treatment facilities, or those taking correspondence or distance education courses offered by the Independent Learning Centre are not eligible.

A SALEP program must be approved by the committee established in accordance with the regulation on SALEP. When the necessary approvals have been obtained, the student will continue to be registered at the school until he or she reaches sixteen years of age, when school attendance is no longer compulsory. Regular contact with the student will be maintained by a teacher or other staff member, and the principal will report to parents whenever the school issues achievement reports. The school will maintain the Ontario Student Record for each student involved in the program.

A SALEP program may involve attendance at some classes or a full-time program away from the school. It may include one or more of the following elements:

- full-time or part-time employment at an approved work placement
- a program in life skills
- continuing studies or other activities that the school board committee deems appropriate to the student's needs and interests

A student's learning in a SALEP program may be eligible for credit towards a graduation diploma.

Appendix 8: Equivalent Diploma Requirements

For *students who do not have Ontario credits* (students from non-inspected private schools or from schools outside Ontario), principals will use the following table and the list of diploma requirements as a guide to determine:

– the total credit equivalency of the student's background for placement purposes;

– the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn to qualify for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) under OSS.

For the requirements for *mature students*, see section 6.6: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OSSD UNDER OSS

	Situation in which the student has normally completed:				
	Grade 8	**Grade 9**	**Grade 10**	**Grade 11**	**more than Grade 11**
Number of years successfully completed in a secondary school program	0	1	2	3	more than 3
Minimum number of credits still to be earned towards the OSSD	30	22	14	7	4
Number of *compulsory* credits to be earned and requirements to be met:					
– English	4	3	2	1	1[1]
– Mathematics	3	2	1	0	0
– Science or technological education (Grades 9–12)[2]	3	2	1	0	0
– Literacy test	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
– Community involvement*	40 hours	40 hours	*	*	*

1. The compulsory English credit for Grade 12 is required if its equivalent has not already been earned.
2. Two science credits are required, as is one additional credit in Grade 11 or 12 science *or* in Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 technological education.

* The principal will determine the number of hours of community involvement required.

In addition to the requirements listed above, principals will ensure that the following requirements are met:

– A student who has no previous Ontario credits but who has successfully completed more than three years of secondary school is required to earn a minimum of *four* credits in Grade 11 or Grade 12 courses before being recommended for the OSSD under OSS.
– A student who has successfully completed more than three years of secondary school education, has previously earned at least three Ontario credits, and has returned to the Ontario educational system may qualify for the OSSD under OSS by completing a minimum of *one* Grade 11 *or* Grade 12 credit.

Glossary

accommodations. In the area of special education, specialized support and services that are provided to enable exceptional students to achieve the learning expectations. Some examples are: provision of specialist staff members; provision of equipment and materials such as hearing aids, learning materials in Braille, tape recorders; provision of extra time for completing classroom tests. Not included in these accommodations are modifications to learning expectations.

adult. A person who is eighteen years of age or more.

articulation agreement. An agreement on the setting up and maintaining of clear "routes" between secondary school and college programs in order to ensure that students are adequately prepared for college programs.

compulsory course. A course that meets the requirements of a compulsory credit and that, as directed by the Minister, must be included in a student's program towards the earning of a diploma.

compulsory credit. A credit that is earned for the successful completion of the expectations related to a compulsory course.

course. A set of learning activities that enable students to attain the expectations related to courses that are developed from Ministry of Education and Training curriculum policy documents. Courses may be given different credit values. Multiple-credit courses may be developed that are based on one or more of the ministry's curriculum policy documents.

course calendar. The name given to the document prepared by a secondary school to inform students and their parents of the courses that are available in the school.

course of study. An outline of the content of a course and other details pertaining to the course, such as prerequisites and evaluation procedures.

credit. A means of recognition of the successful completion of a course for which a minimum of 110 hours has been scheduled. A credit is granted to a student by the principal of a secondary school on behalf of the Minister.

curriculum. The plan for student learning outlined in Ministry of Education and Training curriculum policy documents and implemented in classroom programs through the use of a wide range of resources.

exceptional student. A student who is defined in the Education Act as "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee, established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11(1), of the board: (a) of which the pupil is a resident pupil, (b) that admits or enrols the pupil other than pursuant to an agreement with another board for the provision of education, or (c) to which the cost of education in respect of the pupil is payable by the Minister."

locally developed course. A course that is not described in a ministry curriculum policy document. If offered for credit, such a course requires the approval of the responsible supervisory official in the school board and, when approved, must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Training for ministry approval.

mature student. For purposes of determining further required credits for a diploma, a mature student is defined as a student who is at least eighteen years of age and who has not attended day school for a period of at least one year. *See also* **student.**

Ontario Student Record (OSR). The official record for a student. Every Ontario school keeps an OSR for each student. The OSR contains achievement results, credits earned and diploma requirements completed, and other information important to the education of the student. Students and their parents (if the student is not an adult) may examine the contents of the OSR. These records are protected by the Education Act and freedom of information legislation.

optional credit. A credit that is earned for the successful completion of an optional course. Optional courses are those selected by a student from available courses other than his or her compulsory courses.

prerequisite course. A course that is deemed absolutely essential for the successful understanding and completion of a subsequent course. Prerequisite courses are established only by ministry curriculum policy documents.

special education program. A program that is defined in the Education Act as "an educational program for an exceptional pupil that is based on, and modified by, the results of continuous assessment and evaluation, and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil."

special education services. Services defined in the Education Act as "facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program."

specialized program. A grouping of two or more courses to provide a curriculum focus for students with an interest in specific educational or career goals. Specialized programs include career preparation programs, university preparation programs, college preparation programs, and school–work transition programs.

student. A person enrolled in a school program. No student should be referred to by the course type he or she is taking; for example, a student taking an applied course should not be referred to as an "applied student".

transfer course. A course offered to students who wish to move to another type of course in the same subject. The transfer course will consist of those learning expectations that were not included in the completed course but that are considered essential for success in the course to be taken. Partial credits are granted for successful completion of a transfer course.

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